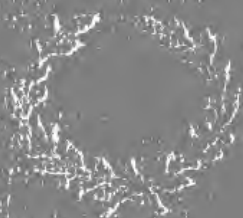
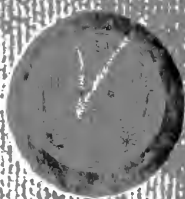


POEMS OF
PERSONALITY

THIRD SERIES

REGINALD C. ROBBINS





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POEMS OF PERSONALITY

THIRD SERIES



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OF
PERSONALITY

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REGINALD C. ROBBINS



— “to speak beyond the book”



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HOMER

THE mighty morning wakes! Earth, heaven and
ocean

Leap to the touch of sweet, swift-footed light
Adown yon orient atmosphere dawn-dancing,
Quick-shafted from the Asian mountain-ridge
Distant upon the lordly continent!
And this green isle with cliffs surf-circled standeth,
A gem amid the many-murmuring waters,
White-ring'd with the wine-wonder of the sea.
And ever 'twixt mine isle and that far shore
The shimmering wind-rows of the wave advancing
Come gleaming onward at a wide approach,
Feeding the eye of the mind with impulse urgent
(Out of the new-born day and fountain'd Ida,
Out of the swift-oncoming air and ocean
Or hither-streaming, sweet, quick-footed light)
To sing to-day once more, as many a day
I sang; as none before mine hour have sung-it
In palace or in herdsman's hut, in ship
On ocean beaten or the rocky place
Of some high altar mountainward; to sing
The strife of men and gods (sith gods impel

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

And alway shall impel the light of morning,
The sweep of the air and ocean's foamy rage
Storm-stricken), to sing of ancient, mighty men
Like ocean, air and earth high-powerful
Yet in a strife the gods had stirr'd them to
Shatter'd and suffering, wasted through the years
(Unless in suffering be best hero-hood!)
Like as a day were wasted when no song
Issues from lips upon the promontory
Nor pæan at the dawn-tide poureth on
The hurrying impulse wine-hued of the wave!
For, many a year, told I the tale of Troia
And of the hero-wanderer seeking home
Against Poseidon, Troia being destroy'd,
In Chios singing who was youthful then
And hale, but now (an aged man white-hair'd)
Feel, by the morning-wind in northern Lesbos,
The singing-hour upon me once again! —
Thou, Zeus, hast felt as when Homeros singeth:
When from thy front full-arm'd Athene sprang
(Goddess of couraged foresight to the strife)
Perchance at morning, when the silver shafts
Of Phoibos through thine high Olympian hall
Woke thee to rapture and thou borest her!

HOMER

O Zeus, in imitation of thy glory
The dawn hath call'd me to create for men
In mine old-age as in mine hours of youth
A music of the elements, a splendor
Of song-burst to be flung o'er world awide
In voice of the bard chanting the woven tale —
New combats and new triumphs and new woes
Which men may sing mix'd with the former chants
Nor guess thereby the maker were grown old!
And, though the fate be dire as is the strife
Through the long day and unto Hades' end,
Yet all is of the morning in my mind
(However agèd be the race of men)
Singing the hero-working though we die!
Doubtless there shall be songs of evening heard;
And songs of noon-tide when the heavier blue
Broods o'er an ocean swooning in the sun
Heedless of gods or men or hero-strife,
Calm, harmless as a tether'd sacrifice —
And they be otherwise than Asia's now
Of blaze and starting forth to the day's fate.
And doubtless may bewilderment ensue
To men not born of morning, wondering then
How that Homeros sang as then they'd sing not;

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

And, finding in Homeros not their own
Noon-moveless ocean of the heedless gleam
Nor terrors troublous of an evening eye,
Shall blame and call me blind! But am I blind,
O Zeus, who stand upon my promontory
In Lesbos near to Troas (where I came
Yearning from Chios for the winds of Ida)
With open'd lips and couraged, steadfast gaze
Ever to eastward at the opening day
Taking thine instigation; whilst from Ida
That looks upon the Trojan northward plain,
Skamandros' flood and shores where heroes fell
Sweeps ever over the wine-faced, rustling sea
Coming and coming as in foam-row borne
The wind of inspiration, thine Athene
(Foresighted to the tumult of the strife,
Sustaining in the hero each resource)
Who gives the impulse to the mounting mind
And makes in me the morning yet of men?
Nay, Zeus; nor are they blind who follow after
With music of a lyre though earth be old,
Old; and the race of men white-hair'd as I!
Not blind are they who, though the noon be dull'd
With hot oppression or the pallid glare

HOMER

Of Hades-ominous clouds black-piled along
The margin of a westward ocean bode
A night too starless, find within the mind
Still thine Athene, still a morning-strength
Than mine the loftier that it singeth yet
Though days and years of element are pass'd
And Troia be forgotten with my name;
And men no more be striving. Yea, O Zeus,
Though all were heedless of thee, or all despair'd
Thine orient turning, never shouldst thou fail
At last (the appointed dawn-tide hour at hand)
In wind of inspiration, thine Athene,
As now to urge upon their voicelessness
A song from out the spirit; which, suffering,
Yet striveth herowise; which seeth earth
As no earth were without thee — though the eye
Be sightless, sightless: even as mine own!

JOB

NOR by the Voice shall I be overcome,
Not by the overbearingness of God
Subdued; where power, domineering still,
Disdains all justice! Shall I be reduced
(And after endurance of such manifold,
Unmerited agonies!) by mere rebuke
In bluster of the tempest, to succumb
In spirit as in body — and be dust,
No longer questioning, no longer Man?
I grant the ways of the Lord, inscrutable!
I grant the injustice, not to be explain'd!
Yet will not acquiesce and turn for Him
A minister of monstrous wantonness
Unstirr'd of nobler promptings. God or Man,
I still must choose between them and elect
(Ah! even the dust but would be questioning!)
The juster, though mine agony abide
Fourfold the vengeance of the unjust Judge,
'Soever mighty to devour me up
With wrath and whirlwind: who His wrath insult!
Ah, Lord! not thus shalt Thou o'erpower the man
By taunt and boasting, though Behemoth too

JOB

(However halfway mighty up to Thee!)
Moan and Leviathan bewEEP Thy strength!
If with Behemoth and Leviathan
I suffer, so my steadfast sympathy
For sufferance tormented of Thy hand
Doubly defies Thee for the brotherhood!
Lo! dost Thou spur the Horse to rush on spears,
Put madness in his nostrils at the sound
Of trumpet and by battle him destroy,
Him and the captains trusting in his might —
And Thine to aid the righteous, nor betray?
Lo! the Gazel upon the sparsest weed
Thou starvest, that beneath the fire at last
Of desert drouth her fever may be flame
And that same speed, Thou gavest her to keep her,
Wither and waste before the javelin?
Behemoth also he at last must fall
Alone, beyond the help of any arm
Than Thine — and dost Thou save him with Thy
 strength?
Or dost Thou watch him all-unpityingly
Gasp out the great gasps, or Leviathan
Drown in the flood that Thou hadst made for him:
Drown and be carcass rotted on the strand

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

To heaven high-stinking, when one turn or touch
Of Thy least finger had sustained him?
Jehovah! Thou hast against Thee many a charge
Of heaviest obloquy: Who may'st, but will'st not;
Who canst all things for good yet workest ill!
And by the Voice of One all-powerful
But all-unjust shall I be overcome?

Ah, God! to force me thus into defiance
Most miserable to the meekness of me:
The worst if last of Thine injustices,
Because preventing me from reverence
As Thou from pity long hast been absolved;
Goading me from my posture of a patience
Submissive still if questioning! That now
From any more injustice I escape
(And with me Thy creation, Beast and Man!)
By rising up in judgment: I, at worst,
A judge over my Maker, face to face!

I tell Thee, Lord! 't is Thou Who must be judged,
If I am but Thine image, face to face,
So capable of judgment even as Thou!
I tell Thee, God! that I will be Thy judge —

JOB

Yet justly, very justly, lest Thy fault
Repeat in me Thy creature. For Thy fault
Is very grievous as I know Thee now
Convicted out of Thine own voice and boast
Of fashioning a world in wantonness.
Thou might'st have pleaded of some power above
Thee
Thwarting Thy will for well; Thou might'st have
shown me
Some compensation to my misery
By justice elsewhere through my great wrong.
Thou pleadedst not, but boastedst of these things. —
I grant Thy ways were erst inscrutable
Anent injustice plainly to be known:
The injustice proven, not to be explain'd.
Nor now might Thine injustice be explain'd
In this its worst compulsion to revolt —
Unless, unless high humanhood compell'd
Of Thy misdeed, Man's scrupulosity
In fear of imaging his Maker's fault,
This better-than-mere-justice speaking now
Be Thy supreme achievement, pardoning all
The dire arraignment drawn of Thine own lips?
For, God! I even in my misery here

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Grieve for Behemoth and Leviathan,
For Horse and Doe (not to discourse of pains
On other men inflicted; nor of Thee
To pity Thine injustice!); I in pain
Unspeakable yet speak at risk of life
(A life how gladly render'd up to Thee;
Save for this zeal, first to defend Thy fame
By seeking explanation of my woe
Against false explanation of the Friends,
And now to acquit Thee in Thine own despite!),
Yet argue, at the risk of death, with Thee
The Omnipotent in Evil, but to prove
Thy world, if half-unwittingly to Thee,
A work of splendor, that Thy morning-stars
Which sang together sang not wantonly!
How were it, Lord! that Thou couldst make such
men

As judge Thee not ungenerously, though
They suffer with the anguish of thine earth?
Perchance Thou feelest too the fate of all;
And pitiest, deserving so my pity,
Most poignantly because Thou madest them
To bear with Thee in patience more-than-just,
To judge of Thee in generosity;

JOB

And knowest the glory of Thy handiwork:
Thyself almost as Man, to glory in it?
What were my vindication beyond death,
Which could not reach Thee as the Lord of Life,
To this that vindicateth Thee by me? —
Speak to me, Thou! declare Thou unto me,
If that the secret of the universe
Be Thine; and mine but counsel without knowledge!
Art Thou now silent, whilst upon my tongue
Trembles the explanation of Thy ways
Their problem and perplexity to man:
The way of pity, that Thou madest us,
And feelest with the creatures Thou hast made
The pangs of Thine injustice and the glory
Of human generosity to Thee
(Proving of Thee Thy wise creatorship,
The saving immolation of Thy pride!)
Beyond all meekness, as I judge Thee now?
Lord! for Thy silence, I submit to Thee!

ISAIAH

IN God's sight and in man's the chastisement
Of Ephraim beneath the conqueror's yoke
Is just; fulfilment of a prophesying
Long spoken, openly the hand of God:
That Ephraim sweats and groans with ox and ass,
Doing hard labor in an alien land
As erst in Egypt. Yea, the doom is just.
For Ephraim, was she not idolatrous,
Allied with Syria and Damascus' gods
(Whether the idols be Jehovah call'd
Or Baal what heed, when God is not of stone?)
A nation of backsliders; save a few
Who, fiery-tongued and of the lips of God
Inspired, spake for Him over overtly
(Hosea, Amos and the mightier twain)
Denouncing idols, Asshur equally
With Baal though Jehovah's instrument
Be Asshur to Samaria's overthrow?
And, where the warning of the prophet-tongues
Against reliance on the heathen strength
Of Baal, Syria and Damascus' cult
Was no more heeded than the twitter of birds;

ISAIAH

And idol-priests within, without the land,
In Ephraim as in Syria, mock'd the more;
There shall not vast Assyrian hosts destroy
And rape into an exile righteously
The people, so to purge by fire and spear
The unclean high-places? And, though here and
yon

Be one or two fair sheaves amid the tares
Enmesh'd in field-wide ruin, shall not God
By riddance root and branch prepare the ground
Best for repentance and the remnant-growth
If any shall remain in His good time?

Ah, Judah! Judah! have I not said Woe!
Woe! unto Ephraim with terrible speech
Of chastisement impending — and when now
Their punishment approveth prophecy
And mine appointment from Jehovah stands
Before the tribes made plain, shall I, in this ;
Mine hour of vindication from the taunts
(From Ephraim or from Judah snarling out
In fierce refusal to allow the truth
For fear of doom or horror at the fate),
In mine exoneration from the taunts

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Of prosperous unrighteousness, deplore
The glory of the justice of our God?
Their doom is just; and God is on my side
Against the scoffers — and shall I denounce
Mine inspiration and repent of God?
Ah, God! could not Thy power have forced Thy
folk,

Those children of the covenant, to care
For Thee and for Thy warning nor compel
The realization of such prophecies?
Ah, God! could not Thy servant, even I,
Have suffer'd, as a scapegoat unto Thee,
For every sin of Ephraim; that they
Thy flock, my brethren still for all their fault,
Had turn'd unto repentance — and bewray'd
My speech, mine insight and my service for Thee
By sheer anticipation, spoiling all
Of warning by the punishment forestall'd?
God, I would vouch to Thee, even I, Thy clay,
Would vouch to Thee for Ephraim, wouldst Thou
But cancel inspiration, leave me proved
Blasphemer — if but yon Assyrian host
Were from the waste-lands of Samaria
And from their fastnesses to north and east

ISAIAH

Cast out; and Ephraim in prosperity
Return'd and once more vineyarded of home!
Behold! if but some fear Thou hadst vouchsafed
Unto their souls (not anger at my words!)
That, Syrian Damascus left alone
To overthrow by those Assyrian hosts,
Scorning a dalliance with the heathen gods
Their feet had turn'd unto Thy righteousness
And so been saved by my false prophesying!

Ah! then had I been more Thy prophet, more
(Though in disgrace) the worker in Thy field;
Then, then, by the spectacle of downfall yielden
(It dawns upon me I should serve Thee so
More than by confirmation of Thy pledge!)
For every high intent within my spirit,
An evidence of God-nobility
Beyond mere mulct and wage, example to them
(Dread Lord! example haply too to Thee!)
Of best desert precluded from reward,
Of loftiest merit openly denied
And Thy world-power frustrate seemingly —
Nay, frustrate, O Jehovah, veritably —
Unless a loftier than justice rule

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Thy world and generosity have shape
Within Thy heart and will, as in mine own
The generosity of huge regret
Hath birth beside my triumph. Ah, for Judah,
Where yet the Assyrian conqueror abstains,
Be generous, God! oh, wreak on me Thy wrath
If by mine uttermost discrediting
Thy meting-out of judgment be forsworn
To nobler purposes, to leading-on
Not by the chastisement but, as in me
By opening of the bowels of compassion,
The travails of a sympathy with Thee
In Thy new part of Healer, saviorhood
Which needeth not the surfeit-hemorrhage
To force the fruit of pity purgative!
O great Jehovah! wreck but my career,
Destroy this prophet-reputation with
The basis of the justice-prophesying
(For generosity can none foretell!);
Purge and prevent Thy people ere the fact
Of God-establishment by ruin of them!
For am not I, Thy servant, one alone,
A prophet crying in the wilderness;
And are not they, Thy people, many thousands;

ISAIAH

And wert not Thou, O Lord, the greater God
For dwelling in the heart and soul and strength
Of thousands glad at home (a fellowship
Of prophets as the heart shall speak for Thee
In confidence beyond the need of foresight!),
Of thousands Thine for love; not in the fear —
The hate — of a poor people laboring
(Some remnant of them) in a stranger-land
With ox and ass beneath the burden of
A conqueror who knoweth not Thy name?
And I, Thy servant, if Thou anywise
Troublest at my discredit and disgrace,
Comfort Thyself that I shall ever praise Thee,
Praising Thee but the more should justice fail
And generosity in Thee awake
To my destruction. As Samaria now
In this her ruin'd silence privily
Should I endure it, nor disturb Thy peace
With any lamentation. For the truth
That I the last, and no man after me,
Should perish of Thy justice, such a truth
(Thou wouldst allow the foresight finally!)
Though I be sawn asunder in Thy courts
(And, shouldst but Thou present the paradigm,

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Then in Thine image might men pardon me) —
The sense of such a truth as man's salvation
And spirit-softening at Thy forgiveness
Would lift my spirit to the mountain-tops
Vocal above the valleys with Thy feet!

DEMOCRITUS

LIKE as the myriad atoms of the sands
So small, so tough that nought may cut nor crush
Nor anywise effect diminishment
In any of them — like the desert sands
Here of Aigyptos 'neath my wandering feet
(These grains in curious shapes indeed diverse)
Lieth the first material of the world,
The substance of the prime necessity,
As though in this hot sunshine wide and whole
Declared, to reasonings illuminate.
Of myriad truths composed the substance holdeth;
Things real; alone in primal shape unlike;
And in such sorts unlike — as primal shape,
Affording to sense and so to human act
Derivative reality indeed,
Doubtless may gender of the impact of them
(Which sensuous characters Protagoras,
Though scarce Leukippos, hath provided for!) —
As can, for seeming to a human sense,
By doubtful parlance of the modern mood
Be added of the mind. Though ultimately
(Leukippos, scarce Protagoras, in this!)

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Are the atoms, so I deem them, as they are
(The shaping first assumed) so wholly like
In kind each unto each that utmost search
(Like mine upon the face of the desert here)
Might nowise set apart as other-sorted
One grain of the world from other — ay, save in size,
Itself from absolute form derivative:
As desert sands, though each as each too small
For diminution, yet are size-unlike,
Some smaller and some larger in themselves.
That thus in size and weight (derivative
From primal form, I know) may difference be
Real, toward our purposes of thought
To be relied upon as given to it
(Though reasonable; yet alogical,
Not sensuous-added of the mind!), among
Things utterly substantial each from each.

Nor need we any other truths assumed
Than these of atomism, the tough, the small,
The several indeed of shape and size
But otherwise an homogeneousness.
For all beside is sensuously derived,
Logic-related, added of the mind

DEMOCRITUS

As 't were, and therefore not approvable;
Ay, therefore not thus for first philosophy!
Ah, here as I stand upon the desert plains
I thus define their full reality,
Sands, sands and sands, beneath diminishment
Or multiplication; myriads, each too small
And all too many for intrinsic change;
And therefore, though no All of Elea,
Yet nothing like the Dream of Ephesos!
The shimmering of the sun-fire well may seem
Sand-alteration; or the desert air
May hang in the margin of the open heavens
Tall palms and glimmering pools of phantasy.
But these no more than falsehoods of the tongue
Are for the physic-search of human wisdom
A reasonable substance. At my feet
Lie sands and sands, a multiplicity
(Declared to reasoning of the high sunshine)
Unwavering save to figment of the sense,
And yet, unlike the All of Elea,
Substantial, not in virtue overall
Of vague enlargement unto boundlessness,
But rather because thus utterly minute
In every element-identity;

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Sands, sands, in truth; a waste as but by naming
(Beware the stagnant void of Elea!),
No stagnant void, but capable, each grain,
If scarce of an ultimate alterance to sense
Yet, in a truth ulterior to sense,
Of motion; ay, not, as sang Parmenides,
A very palm-hung pool of phantasy,
A glimmering merely, but, itself instinct
With potency and the making of the worlds;
A source-of-all-sensation veritable,
A matrix to the modelling of mind,
Not unrelated to the acts of men.

Yet one thing more! Behold the acts of men
(Which for Parmenides were mystery;
Yea, for Leukippos, dubiously described
Without or source or service veritable)
Themselves, as shown us of Protagoras
If not of Herakleitos, motionwise —
And thus derivatively of the Real —
Resembling any act mechanical
Whether of sand or atom! I may walk
Foot-firm upon these granules. I may stoop
And lift, in the hand, of them a multitude

DEMOCRITUS

Sifting the desert-substance myriadwise,
To winnow them high-held above mine head
Like seed from chaff. And like to chaff or seed
Sandward upon the plain the sands pour down
In never-ceasing impulse, every speck
Seeking intent its fellows. Yet isolate
Each falleth, some the swiftlier for their size;
Some softer, widely streaming on the breeze
Dust-fashion: yet fitless either, whilst between them
The interstice, the vacuum obtains
Without which motion were not. For were world
Pack'd tight and full-composed and fitted well,
How were a cosmos but a merest grain,
Incapable of compressions, yielding not
To severations, and internally
Like to the desert-floor too still-compact,
Inertive! Whence, betwixt the grains of the world
Be equal-myriad holes permitting motion
Though real! And my motion or their own
Alike is thuswise valent, as I deem,
By dint of the vacuum, such aperture
Betwixt the atoms of the primal mode
Permitting the translation. Might my feet
Pursue and press-upon the firm-pack'd path

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Further and further from the valley-green
(Where sense-affection so confuseth truth!)
Of Neilos and along the drifted edge
Of these sand-billows (bare of feeling-claim,
So reason-fostering!), save there gave to the swing
Of the foot an opening in the tenuous air
For entrance and for passage of my frame
Parting the ghostlier presence? Might my hand
Find finger-space below the surface-dust
And deep within these granules, were not cranny
And crevice ever betwixt grain and grain
Lurking to lend fluidity? Betwixt
The myriad prime-substantial particles
Thus must there lurk of prime necessity,
Not merely as a fiction of the mind
(For ever must we deny Parmenides!)
An emptiness, a failure each to fit
Its neighbor grain; an absolute negative
Which equally with atom (though denial —
And 'atom' haply too were negative
Whilst positive of cosmic import aye?)
Were prime and uttermost necessity,
A matrix unto substance, even as substance
Were matrix to sensation-imagery;

DEMOCRITUS

, That so through vacuum, the inter-void
(Even as by substance is sensation founded)
The opportunity to worlds is given
For inner motion and new attitude,
For very difference of shape and size. —
O desert, art thou not as vacuum
A sand-denial, yet an unity
Holding in severance and thus in truth
The sands of ultimate substance? For the truth
Of vacuum takes hold upon the mind
To admiration. And Parmenides
(If in a meaning someway not the same?)
His universal emptiness hath warrant.
And I am of the desert stultified
Who gloried in the sand-grain! Shall my mind
Be modell'd as to an emptiness, an One
Elean, despised and yet proved matrix to it?
Or may there be, as Anaxagoras
(Or new-come Sokrates) in sort hath said,
A way of constitution in our thought
Scarce yielding as to a name, a phantasy,
Though yet ignoring not the paradox
That presseth on the reason? There be sands,
Atoms substantial, all-innumerable

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

And all-alike; and there be likewise this
The desert call'd, the absolute nothingness,
The vacuum but in which, by which, alone
In virtue of whose barren breadth, the sands
Are several, ultimate, atomic proven!

I question if a paradox so posed
Be explicable, as with Sokrates
(Nor by Protagoras the elder-born,
For whom no truth were weightier than a name!),
By inference merely to a property
Call'd desertness, a severalty-in-space,
Held as in common of the atom-facts.
For how might wearying distance so obtain
Whereto, wherethrough, wherefrom my wandering
feet

May journey, were the multiplicity
Itself extended as by property
Of every point the same and nought between
For journey? How might alterance inly be
Where nought obtains of ultimate otherness
Save what our thought may from all truths alike
Express, extract as oil but from the fruit
Of palm or olive? Though indeed, perchance,

DEMOCRITUS

Might substance (even as wholly positive)
In every part self-differently intend
An inference, whether of the interstice
Or neighbor-distant granule, through-and-through:
Even as our mind, with truth shot through-and-
through

(Whatever her falsity of imagery
Sensuous-sprung of overt eye and ear!),
Containeth, ay, or seems so to contain
Both desert and the myriad-motived sands
Whilst, whatsoe'er her physic-base of being,
Not to herself atomic nor a name?
I know not, what of Anaxagoras
Might hold within a land of sensuous fruits
(A cosmos-scheme of relativities!)
Bewildering thus the reason, to confuse
In complications of interpretance
To purposes anthropomorphic-felt
Truths true-distinct! But here there are no fruits
(Nought save sands' multiple presence unto touch
In primal demonstration — nay, no fruits),
No facts of sensuous, secondary sights
Or sounds of the mind — as yonder sky-hung waters,
In phantasy mayhap, may be referr'd

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

(So fain I'd understand Parmenides)
To impacts of the atoms whilst none less
Of mind contributed! But mine the problem
Of reason face to face with ultimate truths,
The vacuous extension, different-held
In every interstice, nowise atomic
And yet essential to the atoms each
Their ultimate severalty! Mine the problem
Of sands here in their myriads where I stoop
And lift and sift them all with weight imbued,
Fragments and fragments, several over the face
(As wandering, ghostlier airs by chance define)
Of the drifted desert which my feet press hard
In passing over; passing only sands
And sands still of the desert-formative. —
One comes to wisdom in Aigyptos here
Where showeth the primal aspect of all things,
World's very paradox-necessity;
Baffling the reason: which remains yet wide
And whole as sunshine, open, unconfused
Because distinctively both elements
In reasonable zeal illuminate
Confronting unmistaken: neither truth
Mistaken for a meaning of the mind!

VERGIL

O MUSE, from Rome's magnificence I haste me
And splendors of imperial temples, toward
Thine open countryside and rustic altar,
To serve thee as I may and them the gods
Who dwell not under the porch in city walls.
For Jove is of the open heavens and spreads
His mantle and the carpet of his throne
Not only over the fora but about
The tender and gracious circlet of a sky
That cometh down along the mountain-side
Purplish at noon-day or upon the plain
Shimmers a green of Maius. Hereunto
I hasten, with the sweet smells of the glebe,
Of furrow and of the springing sward o'er all
Wafted and with the tinkle of hundred bells
From hill-path and from pasture thrilling air.
For restoration of Italian peace
Hath brought the shepherd back and him who
tills.

And hither I flee, as thousands of the sons
Of men for countless future generations
Who seek thee, Muse, or hear thy bell and breath

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Within, shall flee the fashion and the fume
(Thanks, also, unto thee, Theocritus!)
Of Jove's Octavian panoply, pursuing
The Jove of oak-land and the oak-loved nymph
With inspiration of thine utterance.
For I am rustic-born and yeoman-bred:
Vergilius, I, herald of field-born things.

The rustic truths I sing of hind and home
More glorious in the splendor of sun and moon
Or stars than is the glistening pageantry
Of torch on torch in painted portico
And gleam of eagles in an armed Rome
When some triumvir triumphs in his hour.
'T is not alone the armies of the sky
In rank on rank of onrush (though indeed
Must man Lucretianwise with flood and storm
Contend, I ween) nor only through the valleys
The noisier winds our trumpets far outblowing
Which move me, nor the keen blazonry of beams
Golden and silver of an Hesperus
Or wild Aurora; but the fervent sense
(Through all the generous strife and noblest toil)
Of friending gods, of spirits of strength and health

VERGIL

Everywhere round about where men and earth
Conspire together to bring forth a fruit.

O Muse, 't was surely to the love of Maius
And fervent friendship for the country gods,
Scarce for a kinglier city, that they came
Æneas and his comrades voyaging;
If fatefully for Rome's establishment
By hero-fighting on the chosen soil,
Yet longing unto loveliest Italy,
Her streams and succoring favor of her shores.
For was it not from ruin of citied splendor
And conflict of the Trojan citadel
Betray'd, that they far over the guiding ocean
Fled and companion'd of the open heaven
If weary yet with dignity endured
In their swift ships and finally to Tiberis
Came and the Latian yeoman-home discern'd?
If by the fiat of the gods or fate
Were cities founded and the kingly Rome
Begun, ah, only with a cultured glebe
Surrounded and the high labors of the seeding,
 he ripening and the harvest, to their hand.
For without sickle and ploughshare may not men

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Abide on earth; nor aught imperial
Arise save swathed in sweet conspiracy
With Ceres and Tellurian increase-gods. —
O Muse, from Rome's magnificence I haste me,
Hailing the splendors of imperial years,
The templed glories of Octavian power
Here hidden, but to the eyes of one inspired
Proclaim'd, beneath the heaven's best height and
breadth,

In earth's fecundity of oak and olive,
Of barley and the blithe flock-pasturing;
The vine; and all that sprouteth under the toil
Of country-stalwart folk, the yeoman-breed
Saturnian, from the Mother! O Muse, I tell
Of empire's best foundation, as I yield me,
Fervent for sweet release from urban turmoil,
To scent and shimmer of this primeval spring!

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JOHN THE BAPTIST

Lo! (for the spirit whispers) cometh one
Out from these many folk who throng the shore,
Even to be baptized of me but now;
Cometh a savior whose whole insight is
Of righteousness and glory through mankind.
Yet, though my ministry may mean but him,
Ay, though the baptism urgeth righteousness
By sign of the cleansed spirit; how might I
Absolve him who hath nothing felt of sin;
I, shamed and sinful, cleanse whose heart is pure?

For I am full of sin and shame, the shame
Even of these sinners whom I bid repent.
For I am wild and of the wilderness
A dweller, lest the sinfulness of men
Have wholly hold of me; yet shame hath hold
Of every part of me and is my soul:
Because I may not see a righteousness
About me, nor a glory through mankind.
Sooth, I have said: 'The kingdom of our God
Is near at hand. Prepare your deeds before
Just recompense impending!' And have so

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Fail'd to attain self-conquest; am as one
Aware of evil. And this sin and shame
Of all men, even them I bid repent,
Is mine; and nought of knowledge of the good
Nor any justice and fulfilment now.

Now is there one who cometh wholly pure.
He steps from out the throng, he in his turn.
And in his coming is mine only hope.
For in the blessèd contact, in the touch
And sight and sound of him, I hope to see
Some righteousness, a glory through mankind,
A justice and full recompense on earth
Now and forever in the thought and deed
So wholly freed from evil, in his soul
So pure and unashamed and utterly
Unlike these sinners whom I bid repent,
Unlike their sin and shame that is mine own.
Even by the sight of him mine heavens shall
Be open'd and the dove of God, descending,
Humanize wilderness, ay, civilize
The wild and savage soul of me who spurn
All known of me, and so must spurn myself
To degradation.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Lo! he comes and speaks —

His will be words acclaiming power in me
And righteousness and purity? For how
Might one thus pure imagine such a thing
As this my soul of sorrows? Ah, how come
To be baptized of one deem'd sinful? — Nay,
He speaks:

“Yea, John; for I, who wholly find
Mankind a glory, yet have need to be
Baptizèd even of thee to take men's sins
Upon me and be utterly their shame.”

PHILO

THE question of the embassy to Cæsar;
Might I assure me to take up the task? —

Not in the desert haply nor the caves
Of rock-bound wilderness may Israel now
Serve God in strength and holiness but, 'mid
The haunts of divers men of many creeds,
Walking the ways as of idolaters;
Though inly praising God with psalm and prayer
For insight of a revelation pour'd
Interpretative of philosophy
By pictured presentation of a truth
Which, or in Kroton or Athenai taught
For rumor of a written Pentateuch,
Yet, by their wisest of philosophers
Hellenic-lofty, were but dimly guess'd:
Who miss the privilege of Moses' tribes,
The spirit-mightiness of Moses' God.
Oh, surely I dream not that in literal proof
Of triumph politic the Jews at last
Alone shall wield from an imperial throne
A power like to Cæsar's and be chosen

PHILO

Successor to the dominance of Rome!
Oh, rather should power of Scripture, working through
An earnest exposition logically
As, ages since, even Pythagoras
Or Platon or these Stoics latterly
Have still expounded in half-ignorance
Scripture and only Scripture to the Greeks
(With nobleness of thought and loftiest aim!) —
Rather, I say, should exegesis, patient,
Transfuse the pagan thought, whilst pagan thought
Illumine mutually to modern ends
Of ethic practice in the Roman State
The picture-proof of Moses — if but he
The perfect soothsayer, Moses everywhere,
Be taken (howsoever inwardly
By parable) for type of perfect truth.
Yea, though the truth of Scripture changeth not,
Men's ways whereunto Scripture speaketh truth,
Men's ways wherein Reason hath practice-truth,
Are otherwise than in Mosaic hours.
And Moses, were he here amongst us still
In Egypt, might not at command of God
Lead from this Alexandria Israel forth
To seek God in the wastes of Sinai now:

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

When every corner of the whole wide world
Were sway'd by Cæsar; and the Stoic cult
With truths of Platon or Pythagoras
Hath half-unwittingly inform'd men's minds
With Moses; and our ways are interfused
Hellene with Hebrew to the gain of both —
To gain of both in spirit, though the flesh
Suffer Rome's persecutions politic!
Ay, though in ancient days Jehovah dwelt
(And Rome, alas! would ape Jehovah now!)
Doubtless in Sinai, gave commandment there
And guided with the pillar of smoke by day,
Of flame by night, His people through the lands
Of dearth and stones where never waters are
Unless by miracle, and miraculous
Doubtless did Moses lead the people forth
From under Pharaoh (hath not Moses said it?),
To-day, this hour, such Moses might not rise
To lead from under Roman Pharaoh forth
Whose power hath hold of all the ends of earth
Extensive as with God's and absolute.
(But, ah! may our folk be spared from rendering him
The rights of reverence due to God alone;
Which now he claims and would by force exact,

PHILO

And, whether or no the embassy I take,
We fain would someway hinder as we may!).
And therefore is the need to read anew
The Exodos in guise of parable,
The wandering in the wilderness, for words
Of allegory to this future time;
And understand the peace of promised lands
(Which peace indeed did yield unceasing war!)
Not for a temporal dominion, save
Some Mind-Messiah, yea, for Paraclete,
Logos of all the angel-daimon host,
An Hebrew-Hellenist of cultured tongue,
In God's good time arise to heal the wounds
Of Judah's spirit decried and wisdom spurn'd
Of Moses from beneath the brazen heel
Of Roman bigot! And until that day
Of logic-wrought deliverance (which each man
May hasten haply too with prayer or praise)
Must he who would to Judah be a guide
Interpret Scripture as a painted wall
Of old word-picture, mystic, secret glyph
Scarce-understood yet a paradigm
Of modern application, helpful aye
For guidance from the bondage of our tribe

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

In latter days: the last, I trust, of earth
Before the coming of the spirit's King.
But so, no refuge may be from the wrath,
The curses and the blows of conquerors
Who hold the Holy City with the grasp
Of plunder and oppression, who oppress
Judah in every city of the East
Or West alike with cruelty of stripes,
Betraying Israel's trust where God hath said:
'The lands of milk and honey shall be yours' —
Though Rome be now of Hellenism the home
As Hellenism be of mundane power;
And Israel waits but mind's millennium
Of coalescence with Hellenic reason
To earn the spirit-lordship of the world! —
We wait! There is no refuge upon earth!

Ai, ai; there is no refuge as of yore!
But now, while yet we wait the culture-hope
Of coalescence with an Hellenism,
Must something in relief of temporal shame
Be largely undertaken, or we perish.
For now, as said, no lands of vineyardage
Remain unto our people, save the lash

PHILO

Of Cæsar's tax-extortion spoil the fruit
Of harvest and the legions take away
All profit and all honor from the homes
Of husbandry and of our Law's delight,
Despoiling synagogues, ay, ravishing
Chest-treasure from Jehovah and defiling
The temple of the body of our maids
(Which should be clean, for altars of the soul)
With lewdness and the bastardy of babes
Which bear the enmixture of a gentile blood.
That measures must be taken to prevail
Against the oppression of the Roman flesh
If Hellenism of Hebraic soul
(So otherwise than bastardy of blood!),
The mind's millennium, Logos upon earth,
Be ever as expected; measures wrought
In terms of temporal resistance, strength
Of obstinacy, waiting, working for it
Even as the Roman works who doth prevail —
Though not by leading-out, where refuge is not!
A modern-Moses, were he with us now,
What might he do for Israel, how proceed
(Smiting the rock of world's unrighteousness)
To turn our tribulations and escape

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

The Roman wantonnesses? There hath been
In Palestine about Jerusalem
And reaching unto Alexandria
Some rumor of one all-uncultured braggart,
With high but impious claim like Cæsar's own
And history aping Moses', Jesus named,
In circumstance ironical condemn'd
And suffering crucifixion recently —
Much to the satisfaction, as I deem,
Both of the Roman governor and wisely
Of Caiaphas as well; for anarchy
Well might ensue were ignorance to rule.
Nay, he could be (a carpenter) no Son
Of great Jehovah Whom his claim blasphemed,
No Logos-intervention in the world!
And (oh, I'd fain 't were otherwise, alas!)
No Paraclete, Hellenic culture-type
Of truths Hebraic, shall be in my time.
Him I shall see not who am growing old. —
Yet, yet! a true second-Moses in mine age,
This year, to-day, this hour indeed might strive
Through influence of the holy picturing
Newly illuminate with insight fresh
Of wise interpretation (which my heart

PHILO

Hath ever loved and revered!) to release
Our folk from bondage, turning thus again
Judah's captivity! Though, if this be I,
This Moses — and where else may he be found
Than here in Egypt? — how should I proceed
(The call from Horeb being for me intended)
Where desert wastes afford no more a rescue,
And Pharaoh for a God upon the earth
(Spare, Lord, Thy people from the worship of him!)
Bindeth his yoke on every place thereof?
Yet, grasp the riper wisdom, in default
Of desert fastness for escape from Rome —
More wisely than the cenobite Essenes
(Who, stung no less by every flesh-temptation,
Flee but the conflict of the race to-come;
Without, by righteous works, achieving conquest
Of any Canaan beyond wilderness)
Who take the letter, but ignore the truth
Of fresh conditions — learn and grasp, my soul,
The reason-teaching, Jewry how to rescue
Scarce by escape but by a courage nobler
Of Daniel in the den; taking upon me
This mission unto Cæsar to demand
First our religion, to his claim adverse

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Of honors superhumanly divine;
First his protection promised for the cult
Of great Jehovah; and, that granted us,
His further admonition to the mob
And to this cruel Bassus, to allow us
(As pledged unto our fathers) here in peace
To dwell in trade assiduously — awaiting
Still a Messiah to the trump of doom
If so our people please (the King, I mean,
Of Spirit-Culture ruling Reason's world!),
But meanwhile hoarding unto politic ends
The riches of achievement, merchant-power
(The waters of the rock-face gushing out!)
To serve well as the chosen Logos-folk
Unto evangel of philosophy
The purposes of kingdom when He come.
For all may not be left for God to do
As when His manna fed the wilderness.
But He will help who first have help'd themselves
To turn oppression to a secret gain
And, in earth's sudden clarification, rise
Soldiers and heralds of the Paraclete,
Possessors of the earth, knowing to use
The bounty of the world stored-up unseen

PHILO

(As practice-wisdom in the Scriptures hideth)
Till opportunity with hand-of-God
Display'd in Him Who shall make new all minds,
Discover in the people of His choice
(This leaven of the universal bread
That feedeth Roman, Hellenist alike)
Already them who hold in fee the nations,
Exacting tribute whereof Cæsar's seems
But idle dross. For enterprise alone,
Not tyranny (more than labor isolate
Essenelike), shall what trade's own toil creates
Acquire and hold till God pronounce us Kings —
Not of a petty, temporal empire, nay,
But to eternity, time's archetype
In Platon's creed descried, whose thousand years
Of waiting, be they tens of thousands still,
Serve and shall serve best to a patient folk
For aye-unending opportunity
And, at the last, fullness of spirit-truth!

Leave to the cenobite the literal word
Of Moses and of Aaron, Pharaoh 'spoil'd
By flight unto the desert fastnesses!
Learn from the lips of men and angels both

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

The novel exegesis; upon earth
(Of that same Jesus spoken, with wisdom haply)
Peace among men until millennium,
Not for secluded sanctity, support
In mere provision by a manual toil
Of unforeseeing mouth-necessity.
But, labor for fruit of trade, for world-resource,
Possession of a wealth among mankind
Exceeding wealth of very Solomon
Or Cæsar — and the Moses be myself
To plead a peace, a privilege for toil
And trade, unto the sons of Israel
Unarm'd, unharmed; ah, but secretly
Achieving conquest that our Judah's folk,
Their spirit-strength in worldly prudence based,
Be worth the coming of the Paraclete
(The Logos-upon-earth and mutual wisdom
Of Moses, Platon or Pythagoras);
They, used to earth-possession ere He come;
Ay, worth God's Choice! — For friends have urged
me on
To voyage unto Cæsar in the cause
Of peace, to plead that persecutions cease
In Alexandria and hate have end.

PHILO

And I have half-demurr'd, not in the fear
Of Cæsar's wrath (though well might he destroy
Such embassy) but, heeding Aaron's way
And Moses' of escape into the wastes
As these Essenes and lonelier anchorites
Mistake the method for a literal
Acceptance of example! But I see
(Allowing now the soul to follow-out
In contemplation every influence
Making for inward mastery), I see
And feel the workings of the symbol-truth,
The mystic meaning to the times applied,
Like picture-glyphs upon old Pharaoh's stones
Still sacred though their literal intent
(The leading-forth by Moses, as I mean,
To any refuge: which I now forswear!)
Of Pharaoh's headship, whence could be escape
Unto a Canaan, be no more believed
Because of Cæsar. — I will voyage to him,
A second Moses, there to plead of peace!

MARCUS AURELIUS

FORASMUCH as the gods have gifted me
With firmness, with a fortitude to bear
The burden of this world imperial;
And by perfervid sentience of mine heart
Above the stupor of the cooler clod
To imitate, within, the soul without
Of the universe at fiery potency;
Forasmuch as I feel within myself
(Perceiving, as with sense which seems not sense
Of stuff material, my frame beyond!)
This integration of the logos-seed
Resistive to attack from aught of earth
And self-containedly the all-contain'd
Sustaining in the daily storm and stress
Of strains antagonistic, reconciled
In power effective of the spirit of me
Controlling destinies unto mine own
Of men and nations in the Roman name:
How should the heart of me, made staunch and true
By favor of the gods, in least complain
Of duty and imperial destiny?
How seek for soul's performance any path

MARCUS AURELIUS

Sweeter than this of privilege to be
Upholder to the universal Rome,
Central support; by high hyperbole,
Well-nigh as though some world-soul of the State:
As in our doctrine of the Stoa taught
Best ultimate recompense of any man —
Who, death beyond, incorporates with All;
And dwells, imperial of the universe,
At last Augustan at the flame of God?

Forasmuch as the gods have made me strong,
Why murmur as for weakness, why admit
Weight of the world for burden, be distraught
At heart with presage of a Rome foregone
And universe disrupted? Am not I
Able to labor yet nor be dismay'd?
And, while the power and honor of the State
Rest in me, shall this soul of me betray
The trust, the confidence wherewith the gods
Appointed me to kingship? Let him seek
Relief, in whom responsibility
Meets and awakes no native kingliness
Of prudence and of wisdom. In my heart
Have the immortals planted self-control

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Wherethrough alone may man control the world.
Unto my vast responsibility
(Keeping me thus with nature in accord)
My nature makes response. Though I be worn
With bodily discomfort (though the waves
Beat round!); though Rome be wasted with the years
As I; and these the Marcomanni knock
With deathly warning at the open door
Of self-destruction to our madden'd State;
Yet shall my soul be firm (stilling the waves
Reverberative wide!) which feels within
The strength to save and be (hyperbole
Of rhetor whilst it seem!) soul-like for all —
Though elsewhere be the days but vanity,
But sickness and corruption unto earth;
But gods gone stale who scarce may be fulfill'd
Save inasmuch as setting man's soul to it,
Gifting him with the courage to sustain!
For thus the Stoic wisdom, grasp of truth
Firm and supporting in the wreck of things
And Rome's bewilderment, her forfeiture
Of ancient piety and god-respect.
For with the forfeiture of fair respect
Toward gods (the temple-stone's entablature

MARCUS AURELIUS

Of empire) and with folly of the sects
Of Christ (seditious even as impious,
Fanatic, truculent and turbulent!),
Of Isis or Mithraic mysteries
Corrupting Rome, hath solidarity
Of Rome's imperial purport pass'd away
And in the passing sapp'd the Empire's arm
Of nerve and sinew: that our legions lie
Battling along the Empire's bounds alarm'd,
In panic-desperation though we crush
These naked Marcomannic breasts anew
An hundred times with bitterness of war
Still never ended; whilst the Roman State
Melts man by man into a common grave
With these barbarians; or Danuvius takes
Civic and pagan blood, mere blood alike,
Down to the distant, dismal Euxine sink
And there in sacrifice of Parthian hordes
Lustrates at last, purifies salinely
The world from Rome's dominion — that a world,
Innocent of our tyranny and stench,
Arise that shall forget us! I, the last
Of Romans (for who else to-day takes heed
To Tiberis?) realize the tragedy

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

In mine own flesh, anticipate the world;
And feel in me our tyranny forgot
And mine imperial load not vainly laid
Down at the basis of a nobler State
Haply, at worst even in the womb of things
Where godliness in conflagration makes
Of chaos sure foundation. But the gods
Meanwhile have given me strength to play my part:
Feeling for mine the wholeness of the world,
As runs the doctrine. Unto each new task
Be the wise heart address'd unto the end;
Forasmuch as the gods have set man to it.

Ay, no man may be (though the Cynics taught —
Too inaccordant with, or world-without
Or, world-within the senses of a soul —
And some among the Stoics have believed!)
Sufficient to himself, heart-unaware
Of burden and responsibility
By tasks beyond the momentary man.
Though the soul fain were free and sweet to feel
An inward emptiness in riddance of
All outward obligation, yet the Soul
Of All within the soul hath hold on him

MARCUS AURELIUS

And aye impels unto the task of all
And universal burden, making light
Indeed the infinite imposition, teaching
The way of heart's effectuality
Even in the linkage soul with soul throughout
The intimate extension. Nought were known
Of any world, were the soul-sense, as said,
Circumscribed in the conscience of the man
To the mere frame of man as he appears
Large though on throne of Cæsar loftily
Yet empty in an isolation felt
Of passionless self-containment! Yea, were mind
A tablet razed, then might the vacancy
Suffer no plenishment; and blank remain
The world of any meaning in my soul,
Though ne'er so Antonine, unto this day!
Yet have things meaning and a passion born
Of strength, not emptiness. And mind were even
Some fecundation of an universe,
A logos-seed still individual,
A God-containment (in the personal self
By sense-containment) of the world without —
In being with me created unto earth
Whilst in me and alone because within

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Cosmic, pneumatic, fundamental, whole:
The self-control which yields control of all,
The world-control which is man's hold of truth!
The man is ultimate; for God within
(And only Godhood proven of the self!)
Compels the God-assumption. And I strive
And strike and am effectual through the world;
Not evidencing soulhood cosmical
Of the world as over-god, but of myself
In terms of God demonstrable within me —
The worldhood of a soul: as after death
Dream'd for deliverance, so now in life
Myself imperial of the universe,
From first Augustan at the flame of God,
Waiting not unto death (which well may prove
A self-extinction of the person-God
As of the person?) to create through God,
As God through me, this warring world of Rome:
Incorporate of all, life-recompensed,
Myself by soul the fiery potency!
'T were thus the undying godship of man's heart
(True temple-stone of all-world empire!)
Alone sustains this Marcomannic war,
Alone remains unbroken with the frame

MARCUS AURELIUS

Of self or city; godship, by this sense
Of felt and passionate identity
(Not in the smoulder'd ashes of a corpse
But in perfervid sentience rational!)
Through and beyond this Roman polity.
This only can enable me to bear
With fortitude and equanimity
The woes of the world: a wisdom of the world
(Scarce of the stale, insufferable gods
A gift to endure their task nor faint for it;
Nor of the sheer sensation isolate,
And so insensible!) which is the God.
And God is of me as I labor wisely. —
Where God is of each wise man laboring
And every wise man laboring is God,
Must world have solidarity though Rome,
Ebbing with blood upon Danuvius slink
To wan oblivion. Though the world be rid
Of all the gods held sacred, yet shall God
(Men's worldhood each as soul-alive divine!)
Give strength; and in Him be the gods fulfill'd.

PLOTINUS

THERE is a mighty storm upon the sea
Impostumated after starless nights.
And I in peril with the driven ship
Through wrath of elements; though they and I
(My soul, my mind but godlike more than they)
Alike be emanation-borne and fill'd
With peace undying of eternity
The fearless as the moveless! And, for now
The danger and the dizziness o'erwhelm
Of physic-element and sensuous things,
Shall I enshrine my soul within herself
Contemplative above the fears impress'd,
By stimulation taken of the fear
To search in sense for truth, to seek a sign
For meanings intimate and ultimate
In outward things that work upon me now,
These elements which so assert their power:
To conquer outward things whilst learning in them
(An haply logos in them may be found)
A symbol of the all-ineffable! —

The emanation of the ineffable

PLOTINUS

Is little like this sea-wind's perilous force
That shifting blows, whether from east, west, south
I wot not — blows now here, now there, and yields
No certainty directive though through leagues
Hurrying amain and hurling potency
To world's remotest bounds. But like the gale
In part, although inverse of operance
And urging by attraction spiritual
Not physic-thrust the minions of its mood,
Is godliest emanation which impels
With intimate insistence every soul
(As every wave is driven of the wind)
Unto her source with onward tendency
Which needs were Godward whatso'er the way;
Whilst thereby unto seeming vacuum,
The All-thing that is nothing outwardwise,
Itself return'd and indrawn, on itself
Revolving self-contain'd if overt still —
As these dark clouds like sand-whirl African
(I fear their gathering fury sinister!)
Aswirl over the mast-head seem to show
My storm-bewilder'd senses, though the air
Itself be black-invisible! Yet, unlike
Aught atmospheric in directive truth

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

(From God and Godward whatsoe'er the way),
The emanations are a constancy,
However of diverseness infinite;
A guide to steer by an we need to steer:
As, Gordianus slain and I escaped
In peace, the pilot seeks from Antioch —
I dare not ask him if the course be lost! —
Romeward to steer the vessel. Thus the hint
Of circumstance, this storm-experience
Of turmoil, variance in the things that move
(In aimless blustering of the baffling squall
So frame-disheartening and so sickening with
The giddiness and wallow of the wave;
And yet withal so inly clarifying
And stimulant because so beautiful
In storm's symmetric power balancing
By force all counter-purpose!) serves the soul
With thought, with recognition of herself
In outward things, searching the paradox
For symbol, for the like and the unlike
To spirit in this the cosmos. If at Rome
(First Ostia reach'd by fortune unforeseen)
I needs must pedagogically prove
The truths of Godhood the ineffable,

PLOTINUS

Should sign and symbol for the paradox
Be found; or words be wanting, nothing taught.
And, in the weakness of the body sick
And helpless to assist with any plan
The steersman, half in fear if half-released
The soul lies free to beauty, to perceive
By likeness and unlikeness unto God
Significance within the element
Its all-controlling grandeur and devise,
Built of the beauty, spiritual truths
(Like universal air) at one with God
Though given in symbol which she half-rejects
Whilst half-accepting. For the truth of God
(Truth not the world as sense perceiveth it)
Were vortex-void in sooth, nothing of God
Nor verity, unless the soul (herself
Of nature mix'd, matter and reason both)
Conceive the spirit-paradox — in calm
Of very storm and sickness — and so find
Symbols which even in unlikeness prove
Half-like and somewise are of God the truth
Because of reason though material
And recognised by soul as of herself.

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

For, though God be but one (and not an one
Of unit-quantity that enters thus
In multiplicity) yet multiple
(Both one and many as God is not one)
Is God's self-emanation. And the world,
Though not God, yet in beauty thus perceived
Of power and eke of terror taking it
Allows for life in God and ecstasy!
And air affords, if scarce by fitfulness
In fury yet, by cosmic continence
Of all-impulsive power self-contain'd
(Although in thrust dynamic, not in love!)
Some image haply of the ineffable.
But yet the uncertain wind I would reject
At heart, that showeth not an own desire
(With wrath to thwart the pilot and make faint
The body by a weltering; though therethrough
Perchance, and to the gale unwittingly,
Be soul by relaxation stimulate!) —
The wind that, like the barbarous and bad
Of mankind, showeth not an own desire
For God but seeketh blindly, gropingly,
Cloudily dark the way of immanence.
(The storm were at its bursting, as I judge,

PLOTINUS

Whilst the ship staggers and the steersman shouts
Hoarsely his hard commands within the gloom!
And how might ocean, vague and agitant,
Yield intellect a figure? Doth the truth,
However self-composed of world's dismay,
In high self-contemplation irritate
(Like this same sea which beats at her own breast)
Its all-sufficiency with failure-stress;
That agony should typify for thought
The ultimate poise and uniformity?
If now in misery I yet achieve
A contemplation and an inwardness,
Would men, save haply an Origenes
Hebraic, chaotic and chimerical —
Would men so take an anguish for a sign
When, save the Stoa with its cold content,
Our order'd Hellenism (self-severe,
Ascetic outwardly) yet makes for joy
And plaineth only when the very plaint
Implies a tumult-beauty press'd upon it?
And as for earth (though, might a long-sought shore
Loom safe, unshaken, how desirable!)
Should any principle so dead as earth
Which of itself would seem to speech inert,

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Be liken'd to the inmost core of life?
'T is true that earth were than the air or sea
More stable, safe for man and comforting
And hence akin to truth's eternity.
But of itself were earth not purposeful,
Impellant nor directive potently.
'T is true, too, that in earth, as all men know,
(Ai! also in these terror-thundering skies!)
Leaps fire unquenchable. And, should we gain
By fortune of the tempest or by skill
Right for the Scyllan straits and storm be o'er,
Should I behold as never hitherto
(Or, by Neapolis, the tomb of towns
Vesuvius might serve and Plinius' tale,
Vesuvius more angry latterly?)
The fount of hidden fire that Sicily
Hath erst despoil'd. And fire might well afford
Symbol of self-compulsion absolute
More marvellous than storm-wind thus and yield
The truth a teaching and a paradigm?
And beauty, ay, be felt in fear thereof
As in this fear of tempest on me now?
But fire as fire were too tempestuous
For teaching of transmutance crystalline

PLOTINUS

Its peace beyond adventuring; ah me,
Too terrible, unless the fear entrance!
And I, though fearful and in fear possess'd
Of beauty-cognisance, would not to men,
Who well might miss the beauty, teach a fear!
So, shall a fire which man must mainly fear
(Despite a latent beauty half-perceived
For imitation of a wrath-of-soul!)
Bursting, enraged and life-destructive (ai!
A bolt that stings and hisses nearward!) grant
The logos to our logic and be body,
Filling the pedagogic need of sign,
To spiritual speech and ecstasy?
Though Ætna seen above the swirling seas
Might seem a rescue out of all distress
(The pilot haply may outride the storm
And reach an haven near Messina's port),
Yet fire, although the mightiest element
And doubtless purest, shall not stand for God.

What, then, may stand at all? I deem no stuff
Nor strength of an universe at voyaging,
However haply like-unlike to God
Or truly of God-substance innermostly,

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Efficient to embody unto speech
The truths of emanation utterly.
And thus my thought, although but now inclined,
Because of beauty, kindlier unto them,
Mine inmost mind must solemnly reject
For symbol each and every element
(There are but four, despite new-fangled schemes!),
Air, water, earth or fire, thus all alike —
Acceptable though unto antiquity
In texts of physiographers extant
Who spied no paradox but took the world
Without significance intelligible
For cosmos self-sustain'd nor sought in soul!
The physiographers would sing but myth
(Anaximandros yet knew boundlessness!)
Not serious faith: their terms unfit to sponsor
(Nor is mere breath the spirit, as some would hold)
For symbol-figure unto spirit-speech. —
Wherein, at least, that nothing of the world
As taken in experience of sense
Sufficeth to exhibit Unity
Am I at heart with old Pythagoras,
To whom indeed past and to-come might well
Be signified of system presently

PLOTINUS

(Ay, wiselier than by mere Parmenides!)
In Number, emanation verily
Out of the womb of Unity, an One
Ever-repeating in each increment,
Whilst in such integration overtwise
Afforded quality, a character
Definable as unity despite
Its serial difference from unity
And so by unity substantial still!
But, for Pythagoras, although in sooth
He voyaged, toss'd upon the tumbling seas,
And should have known their spirit-loneliness
And need of organon to reconcile
With distant bliss the hourly dole and woe,
Seems nought wherein the integrating truth,
Save if by demonstration cold, remote
And unappealing to the love of Love,
Were power and presence to the faith of man.
For Platon, there be many unities,
As many as there be within the world
Life-kinds or aspects, that the voyager
Might at all seasons mentally partake
In integration of intelligence
Perchance, but never in the absolute sign

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Achieve, enjoy the ultimate immanence.
And, though to Aristoteles a truth
Static, beyond the immediate atmosphere
(Nor will it aid, with Anaxagoras,
To make of mind almost an element!)
Stood postulate and illustrate in each
And every yearning toward the God of law,
What way of emanation offer'd he,
Of mutual intropermeance of zeal
(Unless by fair example in himself!),
By any kinship of the God with world
Inherent unto either mutually
Or symbol of enshrining sustenance?
Though someway is the symbol requisite,
The soul an universal voyager
Akin to natural facts as unto mind
And in them known, not as an alien thing
To alien things created as by act
Foreign in source to that it mediateth,
But of herself unto herself sofar
As finding beauty by their symmetries,
Their balancing of forces or of fears;
Akin to natural facts and needing them
Although save reason-serving they were nought;

PLOTINUS

Herself (the soul, as other than the mind
And thereby making-up the natural man)
Nought save demonstrable in natural things:
An emptiness, a vortex-vacuum
In literal troth and not herself a stade
Of emanation save she reach both ways
Worldward and mindward. And the Stoics' cult
Of physic world-soul (which should contradict
Their mood-indifference), ay, despite therein
An hint of intellect, I dubiously
Distinguish from an antique burning-up
Or burning-down of Herakleitos' scheme:
A sign mistook for that it signifies;
And signifies, if by the proved mistake,
Too darkly for the teaching of the truth!
Ah! though I voyage and am wholly held
In weakness, sickness of the sea-wide wash
(And fear of the tempest, found yet beautiful!)
Shall I not yield unto the easier way
Whether of myth-worn element with those
Of earlier days or, with the Stagirite
And Platon, of a truth beyond our world,
But with the mind seek still if ecstasy
(A standing in the very truth of things

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Though living and embodied) be allow'd
With weakness of this weariness and fear;
And vision of the final symbol come
With swooning of the sorry wanderer.
The speech must be embodied; else were God
Without world-emanation and the soul
Mute in the presence of the sensuous show
Whose beauty mirrors and partakes of her!
The speech must be embodied. And the mind
Turns in upon herself in fear of storm
Acknowledging the beauty, yea, acclaiming
With high abandonment the fury of it,
Will-less but sapient as for ecstasy.
Around me is indeed a turmoil wild,
Through fainting senses for a last time taken.
The waves wax high; the laboring vessel heaves
And settles with the billows' weltering:
Her pilot wots not whither, save a sun
(Unseen yet borne within his reasoning soul)
With confidence directive guide him true
And yield him certainties to me unkenn'd:
The sun, oh! would he conquer with his beams
The blackness and with safety (which the sense
Still craves in fear of death) ah! grant us light!

PLOTINUS

Light! Can it be that, high the mast above,
An orb is struggling, swirling, straining through
The hurrying murk? Or doth a phantasy
In swoon possess me that I seem to sight
The heart's desire whilst yet my soul is held
In elements adverse? Doth ecstasy
Perchance excite a vision of the good
Rescue-like from this immanence of death,
Vision of emanation almost as
The One ineffable? These seeming beams
Astream, the rent and scouring clouds, the bright
Blue of the noon and bare beyond the prow
A lift of the land, a mountainous upthrust
To Ætna's overpowering eminence:
All dream'd though in the agony of death
By virtue of the visioning! — Ah, Light!
Ah, Light! in whom alone the elements
Have logos, bountiful emanation, sure,
Direct, unswerving yet and penetrant
(What heed, whether man's optic spirits pierce
Spaceward and thence rebound upon the eye
Or if sight be an urgent influence
In pact corpuscular?) ay, penetrant
Athwart the universal, self-evolved

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Unto the confines of the universe,
Whilst self-directive ever immanent
In radiance that moves not, searching through
Far spaces yet remaining at the source,
Creative as of worlds out of itself
Without expenditure of force or time,
With scarce self-diminution: figure fit
(I care not if, with scant significance,
Thy name already hath been mouth'd in vain
In mysteries Mithraic or the tropes
Of Platon's teaching or Apocalypse)
For that which must not seem a myth beyond
The reach of life; which in immediacy
Of commune mystic is no mystery
But apprehended of the seeing heart —
Light! I have found thee in mine ecstasy!
Though but a swooning dream, above the noon
Of fear and storm, I trust thee! O'er the soul
An influence of symbol, to the teaching
A tongue, the very language of the mind! —
The sea grows strangely calm! The sailors shout
As anchors plunge in the brine! The vessel swings
As 't were beneath the lee of some tall rock!
My faintness waxeth firm; mine eyesight cleareth.

PLOTINUS

And light, yon subtlest, shimmering effluence
Which everywhere from sun outpouring flares
(The optic spirits be but light's rebound,
A to-and-fro upon the Godward way!)
With visible beams about the heavens and o'er
The face of the glittering sea and on the strand
And cliffs of island coast gleams ardently;
A revelation of all elements,
A thing significant! Ah! not an air
Wandering unwish'd-for, undirective through
Cloud-regions whither-whither o'er the wave
And vaguely landward, nor a passionate fire:
But thrilling earth and saturating sea,
Entrancing air, a fire without fear
And beautiful by soul's-own gladness in it
And poise of joyous equability! —
No vision, then? No ecstasy? But plain
Salvation from a watery wrath with just
Enough of frenzy-fear's intoxication
To open to the seeking soul a beauty,
Teaching her of herself within the world,
Which (Gordianus slain; but kind, Philippus)
Now may I teach unto the heart of Rome! —
An hopeful waiting till the new north wind

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Hath spent itself and will allow our course;
Meanwhile in safety 'neath a crystal sky!
The baffled gale above the guardian bluff
Goes wailing. And the pilot smiles serene.

ORIGEN

WHAT mean the prosecutions and the cry
Of many perishing, our testifying
By blood unto the certainty of truth?
What mean the prosecutions; when the truth,
Darkly by pagan picture, brightlier through
God's revelation, if by parable
And mystic exegesis either way
In mouths of men yet, as by allegory,
Were equally intended at the heart
(For so my Principles have plainly proved)
Of every man sincere if ne'er so blind
(Ah! even by Celsus in his falsities!),
By Platon, Zenon, Philon or by him
The porter-pedagogue of whom I drew
Myself a sense of truth, though disbelieved
In metaphysic, literal detail
Be Platonist or Gnostic or whatnot
Of minor heresies? And if myself,
Following Clement's or Pantænus' strength,
By proof of loftier insight have opposed,
Through fifty years of teachings liberal
And generous to the weaklier counterproof,

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

The lesser evidence of pagan schools
And spake by splendor of a God reveal'd
Logos-wise to the reason and the heart
In Christ His history and parable
When mystically reinterpreted
To anagogic wonder — for such share
In universal wisdom shared by all,
For such a part in man's humility
(Which every Christian hath) and wish to
serve,

Should emperors and consuls instigate
These savage cruelties of city mobs
Whereby among a many martyrdoms
Of nobler spirits now return'd to God
Even my poor frame hath suffer'd, that I
lie

In prison-durance sick and fain to death
By dint of punishments unearn'd of men?
'T is true that man deserveth punishment
By spiritual fall, but expiates
Prenatal sin by putting on the flesh.
'T is true that death-release returns to God
The enchain'd spirit with an holy joy
If only in his life-time seeking truth :

ORIGEN

A search made splendid and salvation sure
By evidence of unity with God
Afforded by atonement, Christ for all,
The Logos in the world of life and death,
Exhibiting the soul's eternity.
But I am old and in abundant pain,
A paradigm of misery; and needs
Would understand, where understanding fails,
This supererogation. Man were saved
By faith and knowledge — why this suffering?
Ah, though mine inmost doctrine would regard
The body of Christ but as a pseudonym
For Logos-operation from the first,
For mundane-immanent eternity,
And therefore very Christ a parable
Of wisdom and the world's divinity
Scarce quasi-human in historic sense;
Where now the cosmic mystery, where now
Unto this suffering body truth more true
Than Christ the Sufferer (I deign'd to teach
But unto catechumens!), He whose pain
Sufficed unto the ages? Wherefore, Christ,
I question of Thee, even as man to Man,
For comfort under torture: why Thy sheep

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Be slaughter'd, to what end the wolf allow'd,
When Thou for all mankind hast suffer'd so?

I query, Christ! not solely for myself
(Nor even for my father, long in peace,
Leonides who died as I may die)
But as I am of many sufferers
An one to whom Thy gift of tongues hath fallen
In mark'd degree, that I someway may hope
By speech in inward disputance to find
A way of understanding and a sense
Of God's high Providence to future years
In these His admonitions of dismay.
For I am bleeding at these smarted sores
And bruised with blows, that I am fain to die
Like to Leonides now long in peace
My father whom I loved; myself too old
To bear in Cæsarea far from home
My pain (nay, I might linger many months,
As I in exile many years endured,
Though miserable) who am fain to die
A testimony to their cruelties:
I though without a controversial wrath
(How might we hate at all who learn of Thee

ORIGEN

The teaching of Thy suffering in this —
Yea, were it to kill wrath, that we should die
A spectacle for pity?) — I feeling all
Opinions plausibly a veil of truth
Each in its kind for symbol; and mine own
Faith and opinion but the noblier posed
And comprehensive of the pagan truths
In warrant of Thy witness unto men!
Unto the purpose of a truth prevail'd
Against the demons' machinating power
Thy witness was essential: how now mine
In feeblest imitation though it be?
How need the imitation of Thy pain
Who conquer by an imitant belief?
I grant that, Christ, upon Thy martyrdom
(As could not be were Thy humanity
But Logos-mystery and nowise man —
For, lo! the gnosis still must suffer with Thee!)
Hang all the Law and Prophets. Yet, should men
Continually corrupt as with a crime
Repeated, what supreme of holy proof
Anent men's long-lost unity with God
Thy martyrdom provided; when alone
(I speak the outward-doctrine of my pain!)

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Thy pledge of earth-atonement therein given
And therein erst for aye offer'd the world
Could sanctify the stigma of the crime;
And when the sacrifice of merely men,
Of me or any in the theatres,
On cross or reeking in the city streets
Can scarce in least efface the hand's disgrace
That drives the nail or strikes the lance-head through?
For we, O Lord, are otherwise than Thou
Despite best proofs of final unity.
For we are fallen by prenatal fault
In earlier lives and are not as Thou art
Freshly if still eternally from God.
Ay, we are but the men whom Thou didst save.
(For, lo! my pain would numb the gnosis quite
And leave me but the faith of youths untaught,
Who many years was big with wisdom inward!)
Though faith be in us and Thy truth reveal'd
Of Thy part ultimate and absolute
Sufficing for the cure of every world,
Yet on our part, save for the fact of faith
(Remaining now to me, though gnosis fail
And esoteric dogma for my pain!),
Save for the simplest fact of some belief

ORIGEN

And therefore of some inference of Thee,
Is truth as diverse, as diversely-held
As there be men: some more, some less in faith
Enlighten'd by Thy love-life, yet the wisest
But meaning Godhead as by symbol spoken, '
Not by immediacy: nothing known
Of ultimacy save the fact of faith
With sense of tendency toward God therethrough
As by Thy death provided. And of them
Who heard not of Thee but desired a truth,
Their Sokrates correctly puts it plain
How all is of opinion; though he miss'd
Well-nigh the saving confidence for whom
All was inquiry with no last reply.
Whilst some there be (in Alexandria now
Or Rome I wot not, as the years pass on)
New pagan teachers who, in honest search
For perfect truth though failing Christian sight,
Pretend an insight by an ecstasy
(Like as but God is known unto Himself),
A standing out of self — we cannot so!
And yet in them, although the sign and proof
Be overlook'd and nothing be set forth
For visioning, there were the saving faith.

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

And thus, that all we feel or suffer in heart
Or know of others' patience still must be
Mainly an evidence of saving faith
But not salvation, not the perfect proof
Of God-made-manhood, what were then the worth
Of prosecutions and the testifying
By blood and death unto the truth of Thee;
Which, absolute in Thee, must yet in us
Be little nobler than a pagan creed,
Only by one degree beyond a truth
Of Platon or of Zenon or of this
Plotinos: if but this Plotinos' creed,
Learning a content in the fact of Thee,
Might learn humility! And if Thy love
Provides a revelation absolute
In essence, basic to a gnosis-scheme
Of Logos-generation, as I taught
The elder, sturdier of inquiring minds
(Following Philon haply), yet the truth
Were foster'd not, unless I reason false,
By prosecutions wherein men pretend
Pagans to absolute authority
Which in Thine own example stands denied,
Christians to sufferings that atone the world!

ORIGEN

O Christ, in this my suffering I pretend
No mundane ministration — I but die;
Or live, maybe, in sufferance the more!

Yet and by faith there is the certainty
Which needeth not the gnosis, to be mine!
And we of the revelation (as I wrote
In Christ against a Celsus' falsity)
Are rightly fill'd with faith as are not those
Who base truth but in thought, though subtiest-cull'd
As Sokrates' from grist of many minds
Thrice-mix'd and mutual-sifted — woe to faith
Were Sokrates the Savior; woe to truth
Were Christ of men forgotten! And in Christ
We hold opinion nearer unto God's
By sense of parable than any man's
Who seeks direct in ecstasy to take
A truth devoid of earthly inference.
And, ha! why might not such sheer certainty,
Too proud to confess its entity for Thine
Chiefly and scarce of self (as I in that
Internal-doctrine of the Logos-scheme
Had claim'd save for a sane half-consciousness
Of merit in the pagan argument

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

So like to mine and yet so unlike still!),
Why might not such a sense of certainty
With hot-head wrath which never could be mine
(O Christ, I dare a dying, dreadful guess
Of future things!) within Thy name and God's
Adopt — with propagation of Thy church
As the Word groweth and Thy mustard-seed
(I speak Thy parable for timeless things)
Supplants the very Empire — undertake
A persecution of the elder faiths,
A cruelty upon the creeds of men
Who lack but light of Thee to love with us;
And blood-retaliation quite blot out
For triumph of the grim-eyed demon-crew
The patience now of dying in Thy name?
Nay, why might not the growth of Christian power
(By mine own exile I have ta'en the sting
Of bishop's scourge for virtue of a truth
So singly-different from the synod's say!)
Provoke interpretations of Thy tale
Seemingly wide asunder as the creeds,
Then lost from sight and lacking for a foil,
Of pagan now from Christian; when the cry
Of blasphemy anent a theme beloved

ORIGEN

Augment the indignation; and the wrath
Of men be roused and prosecutions flare
Church-wide because, forsooth, Origenes
Hath differ'd subtly from Demetrios
And held, 't would seem, two doctrines plausibly
And was a presbyter in Cæsarea
If not in Alexandrian schools at home?
Anent Origenes of many creeds
His faithfulness or falsity to Thee,
Whether his martyrdom were in Thy name
Or in the name of Philon: such being held
Perchance anathema to bishop-folk?
And blood evoked of heresies blot out
(My thought hath grasp'd the worst that might ensue
Because of certainty which saveth souls!)
The patience of us dying as for Christ? —
The patience of us dying: that is best!
A testifying to the truth of Thee
Who died to save the world; that thus we too
(If I be now allow'd to die for Thee
And linger not beyond my ripening
To rot in Cæsarea!) thus we too
By symbol and by parable of Thee
Afford a content to the certainty

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

In passion of renouncement, without wrath
Exhibit truth-salvation, minister
In meekness to the saving as of souls
(Whose bodily hands drive home the piercing thrust
Of spear and sword or bruise and break with stone)
Who by example of the faith in us
Better than prowess brutal of the mob
May turn to Thee and seek by these my wounds
A Godliest of opinions which may yield them
Substance for seeming ecstasy, a Word
To teach Thy parable in this of me!
For I am fain to die, wounded and old
In Cæsarea, exiled first for truth
And then maltreated by the mob, a man
By friend degraded and by foe destroy'd —
Though none the less assured that in such wrongs
For men's opinions' sake I yet may feel
Not chaos of misjudgment but at heart
Their faith; in them the certainty of truth:
And yield my life's opinion; testifying.

JULIAN

THE re-establishment of truths august
And worship of the Gods Olympian,
The family imperial of the skies
As they are children of the Mighty Mother
Cybele and the all-paternity
Of Mithra, universal fount of life:
These are my holy purposes, with power
Of pure authority, from Jove derived
And nobly in my blood to me descended
(By lineage, by adoption under law
Or by imperial legions' legal choice
Alike) from him Augustus the divine —
That primal, perfect instance on the earth
Of God-Olympian come to dwell with men!
What folly to adopt unto the State
A rabble-hero, Christos of the mob
For tutelary; who at best might be
The offspring of a tribal god, Jew-born
Though traitor unto Jewry, as I deem!
What folly to adopt for tutelary
A probable impostor, an apostate
(Never was I with willingness baptized!)

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

And leader of sedition: nowise worth
To grace a Roman triumph of the East
(I look for triumph, after Persian wars!);
Not fit to grace a triumph, but deserving
The felon's death he died, disgraced, obscure!
Alas! how could the imperial State be safe
If built on weakness and obscurity
When every Emperor himself must stand
Illustrious, strong and in a father's place
And power for the governance of men?
What weakness, if what tyranny perchance,
Hath been of the bearing of a Constantine
(Worse, worse of mad Constantius murdering,
Whose faith profess'd of peace the more condemns
him!) —

Bearing of Constantine, the hypocrite,
Who sought by meek adoption of the mob's
Rebellion in an anarchy to soothe
The time's distemper, yet drawing tight the rein
And spurring sharp as opportunity
Encouraged outrage! (Doth the Christian creed
Make moral rulers?) Though I well believe
He little revered the presbyters,
The bishops with their quarrellings accursed

JULIAN

And fatuous, council-seal'd anathemas
Because of curious heresies forsooth
Of anomousian, homoiousian cants
Confusing the claim'd god-sprung beggary
By every borrow'd Gnostic quirk of talk!
How could earth's Emperor truckle so
To such-like schisms, ranting sophistries,
Themselves without approval respectable
Of any poet or philosopher
Anywhere taught in church or portico
Their deity Hebraic to attest? —
Nay, at the best and granting Christos half-god,
What culture earn'd he of the schools; what art,
Philosophy or nobler poetry
Bequeath'd for reminiscence? Just a story,
A folk-tale parabolic, simply said
And artless, negligible, save it bear
An hidden burden analogical
Someway seditious, someway blasphemous,
Whereof all Christian augurs (be there such!)
Make tiresome dispute interpreting
The pitiful oracle! And where, I pray them
(Some glutton daubings I at least have seen
Of sheep and doves and fishes and a feast!),

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Where are the sacred statues of the cult,
The evidences of a gracious presence,
Austere indeed but none less favorable,
Auspicious unto him who knows to burn
The pious oil and in sacrifice
To draw the knife athwart the victim's throat? —
Here have I placed upon my palace-walls
And elevated in a thousand shrines
The statues of Olympian deities,
Mine own and many of my kingly race;
With rescript that the name of God shall be
Zeus-Father Mithra, no more Jahveh-Son!

And one thing further, ere I crown success
With Persian conquest, I shall set the Jews
To building up anew Jerusalem
In insult to the Christians utterly!

PELAGIUS

HARK! to their persecution hounding me
From fierce and schism-disrupted Africa
At instance of Paulinus to the feet
Of John, good bishop of Jerusalem;
Where this Orosius, pursuing far,
Hispanian though he be, in Palestine
Lifts tongue of accusation: heresy
The charge which I must face (Celestius
At Carthage was condemn'd!) even here where Christ
Faced persecution for an heresy!
Almost I do believe I am in error,
Holding in man a natural righteousness;
When such a spectacle four hundred years
Hath shown of derogation from the first
Inspired acceptance of the heart and help
(Four centuries long, since Christ in the Temple taught!)
Which He affords. Some sin-original
Even among Christ-faith-professing spirits
(Prevailing now as not Christ-face to face)
Must hamper the Christ-purpose in the soul
If back to persecution, paganwise
As we were Diocletians, savagery

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Of accusation and of punishment

Men hark as though they all a Christ would kill —

Ay, witness the fury struck and took between

Their Donatists and Augustinians,

Too inexcusable of either part!

And now this hounding, as a dog the deer,

Of me who in the Holy Land of Christ

Turn to defend me at the feet of John!

Yet fairly, in my turn! I need not yield

To falsity but that their ways are false.

I need not brand the heart of humankind

For all-unrighteous, but because a few

Now for the moment have their fangs in me

(Oh, John is nobler than their Augustine!).

Grant them, their hearts are hard, lost each his soul',

Should that truth touch the speculative point,

Destroy my doctrine of a clean-will'd choice,

An unpredestinate and native grace

Of recognition of the right-in-God;

And force upon the thought their grace-of-God

Imposed upon a sin-original

Which (freely, if at all!) must cleave to crime?

What beggary of reason such would show

PELAGIUS

Who argue of our freedom, yea or nay,
By evidence of fault in me or them!
For, lo! though I assert the will were free
To choose God or reject God (holding Christ
Man's best example of the Godhood-choice
In outward life, as Christ within Himself
Was Godhead: not the half-god Arian —
Wherein with Athanasius am I one),
And that the nobler in us be to adopt
The right and true, conforming to the wish
Of God Who made us that we might be saved;
Though I assert men's moral dignity
Of voluntary righteousness in God,
Should any failure here or there of men
To choose God evidence, in any least,
The sad compulsion to depravity
(Proclaim'd of every Augustinian hound)
Unless God interfere by ceaseless grace
To bind us to beatitude unwon?
Or how were God to be supposed asleep
And negligent of the furtherance by grace,
Which every moment mundanely would need,
In leaving to a sole historic spark
(The flint-fire sole-supposed of Christ-within) —

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

However absolutely infinite
In terms of God's, not man's, eternity —
Men's faith-upflaring to the heat of truth;
A negligence demonstrable, I ween,
Insoforth as of man 't were provable
That few have faith, that myriad multitudes
Lack grace and are unchosen but in sin
Live ever laxly; pleading sins supposed
Of Adam for a taint inherited
And blame-exemption by the lapse of God?
How bears the bad example either way?
Rather should that within the mind of man
His impulse to discover and to prove
The truth, our ever-struggling upwardness
Of effort to achieve and aid and offer,
In this life-education given of God,
Example Christ-like unto all men else —
The strength and sweetness of the spirit seeking
And finding in the daily tasks of earth
The way of earning heaven unslavishly,
The way of doing well by conscience' light,
Refute the poor predestinary dream:
Their waiting watchful for an unsought faith
By grace, while noway working day by day

PELAGIUS

In will, in zeal toward high humanity
Firm in the following, for active love,
The Christ-example to be glad and free
Upstanding reverent beneath the heaven
Whence God hath sight of hearts and hopeth for us!
Whence God need never stoop to intervene
And thrust the thought of Christ by miracle
(To spoil our splendor of a consciented soul!)
Beneath the cravings of our cowardice
Who crouch and pray but owe no self-respect
To make us worthy!

I will have respect
For man as also for the manful Christ.
I flee no farther but will face my foes
(Jerome is of them who was erst my friend)
Not bitterly; but strive as best I may
To wake them to that soul-nobility
Which all men, even this Orosius,
By dint of Adam-lineage may earn
In following Christ-example, Him Who faced
The persecutors not with bitterness
But this alone: 'They know not what they do!' —
Face accusation with an heart of proof,
Knowing God made us nobler than they know!

CHARLEMAGNE

I LIKE not that the See of Rome should set
Sudden and by surprise the Empire's crown
Upon me as I worshipp'd unaware!
It was not as with Leo I arranged,
That he should so assume to consecrate
With papal benediction power and place
Which I by birth and by my labors added
Have earn'd above the people — that the people
Should hail me Emperor as though because
A Roman bishop's act empurpled me!
'T is nigh intolerable! We had agreed
Election by the Romans; whereupon
A coronation by the Pope of Rome
Pursuant to mine independent right
Of power equal to Irenè's power;
Not as some exarch of the See of Rome!
How have I not befriended this same Leo
As Adrian before him in my wars;
Rescued from bodily persecution, purged him
From accusations of adultery
By mere acceptance of the sinner's oath!
And then by solemn trick to be surprised

CHARLEMAGNE

Unto reception of the grant assumed
Where lay no power of granting, save my power
Supported and sustain'd in every deed
This pitiful vicegerent of the church!
I like it not. I almost had upsprung
And smote him down for his impertinence;
But did refrain within the Sacred House
Before the people. Yet the cunning priest
Deserved the blow. For by my complaisance
Hath not he fasten'd on the Empire's crown
A vassalage to Peter? Shall not Popes
Assume and shrilly arrogate to heaven
And over the wide earth a potency
Temporal, based upon the paltry game?
A temporal king? Not he; though Constantine
Half-gave, no doubt; and Pepin liberally
Gave lands in vassalage! Nay, nay! in my time
Shall he be vassal for the Exarchate
And all things else unto the Frankish King;
Still vassal merely and no lord in least —
I warrant me, long as my life endure!
I take the crown, my right. The Roman people
At worst elect me by immediate voice
As peer to any blood-stain'd Byzantine

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

And suzerain of exarchs — this the point
Well to put forth in public lest Irenè,
Bitter at failure of her marriage-plan,
Attempt the insult of according me
In Italy pretended vassalage,
Exarchal office, to appease her priests!
Yea, Rome and I must threat against the East
A common front, the Latin with the Frank,
Whether this Leo's heart be false or no!

Such, such for indignation at the dream
(I say not 't is of Leo — yet — I doubt me!)
How spiritual power upon the earth
Can of itself sustain a temporal arm
To cope with sovereigns! Such, for policy
Preventing rupture! And in sooth my mind
Knowing the power of spiritual place
When terms, beyond the tenure of this life,
Are told of recompense and punishment,
Ah, anxious to show repentance ere too late
For certain family deeds (nay, not the crime
Of that Irenè!) and have Popes to plead
With God for mercy on my sinner's soul —
My mind is fill'd with piety, with zeal

CHARLEMAGNE

To render unto God a good account,
Pleasing to Popes sofar as possible,
Of this my Catholic Empire. The Lombards
Who menaced Peter's very primacy
Have fallen before me; and the Saxon hordes,
Their Irmensaüle spoil'd and carried away,
Have felt the sword and scourge of Gospel strength,
In baptism faith confessing, else in death
Drinking the dregs of outlaw'd heathenry!
And we of mine own kingdom have been set
To honoring God by ordering our ways
In law, in learning and in righteousness.
I love not Popes. But, unlike yon Irenè,
Repent and pray and am Christ's champion,
Protector, propagator of the Word!



ERIGENA

BOETHIUS hath indeed to us of Rome
(I mean, the genus of the Latin Church
And, here among the Franks, our clerkly kind)
Open'd a new possession spiritual
In strict transference from the tortuous Greek
Unto the simpler, easier-understood
Vernacular of the Latin hierarchy.
Yet and that learnèd scholiast gave alone
One aspect of the ancient, pagan thought:
The logic, dialectic organon
Of Aristotle, him the Stagirite.
'T is true, how dialectic enters in
To every utterance of the blessèd lips
Ambrose and Augustine and Gregory,
Jerome, the glorious fathers. But no word
Is open to the Church of any such
Who in the Eastern language wrote and taught;
Whether the blessèd fathers or, beyond
The circle of the saints, some Origen
Or Alexandrian of Plotinus' school,
Who seems in much, if not in Christ reveal'd,
To speak as even Augustine hath spoken

ERIGENA

Of Godhood and of truths intuitive.
I would, the whole wide world could read as I
The Oriental tongue! And here in sooth
Are works of one, the Areopagite,
Erstwhile deliver'd from Byzantium's king
(I mean no disrespect — an Emperor!)
As gift to Louis, him whose Palace School
Under the patronage of Charles, the young,
I teach and govern. Surely, too, these works
Speak much of unity of man with God —
To the misery and madness of our times
Sore needed! Like the sage Boethius
(He died, no doubt, for too great honesty!)
Will I unfearing overset the Greek
Unto the time's vernacular of Rome;
And so do service to a future time.

But, whilst I serve by setting forth in speech
The reasonings of an old authority,
May I not seem to yield unto the times'
Servility of mind and grant with men
The fond supremacy beyond our own
Of the reasonings of the fathers: how our reason
Should follow, imitate but step by step

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

With phrase and passage out of every book
The earlier opinion; that our mind
Be nought unless some image of a mind
Long dead and utter'd unto long-lost years!
With reverence I say that Augustine,
Though dwelling in the Scriptures, gave to these
New meaning by the glossæ of his soul,
Not slavishly repeating to his times
A truth long-known and stagnant but, by force
Of demonstration in a new-born light
Anew achieving of the truth of God
A mundane emanation. And shall I
But copy him the Areopagite
Or Augustine, or Ambrose, Gregory
With what of scholarly acumen comes
In earnest reverence; or, reverently
Still, of the substance of the fathers' truth
(And so, of God's) allow new worlds of reason
From earlier infinite storages to flow
And self-illuminate our weariness?
Why rest on old ensample, when within me
I feel fresh insight, sense intuitive
Of Godhood in the wilderness of world?
For was not reason primal in all things

ERIGENA

(Quote my Magister, my Discipulus!),
Prior in nature to authority
Which, though transmitted from the earliest time
Yet, baseth in a secondary source,
A past which was not at the first of earth?
And say not, as with him the Stagirite
Or those who follow him, that God above
Give exhibition of authority
By primal being and a truth reveal'd
Wheretoward our nature yearneth. For in truth
The absolute God, being utterly o'er-all
Without division, doth not of Himself
Ensample set and sheer authority
But, only in the creature, as our reason
Being emanation, God as self-beknown,
Exhibiteth within and to itself
The very absolute authority,
The Godhood of the essence of the man,
With Christhood of the Father. As did he
Of Hippo, he the Areopagite,
Plotinus even, even Origen,
Shall I in governing my Palace School
At all cost and at every danger dare
Assert the ultimate authority

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Of the spirit rational, the logos in us
Still world-establishing. Boethius,
Who offer'd to the Western world the truths
Of ancient dialectic, none the less
Despite the teachings of the Stagirite,
Declared a modern and a Western truth,
The present comfort of philosophy
For guide within religion unto honor
With self-respect and yielding not to pride:
And suffer'd of Theodoric therefor.
May I offend not and be longer spared!
But, come what may, the substance of our God —
Reason, and ever insight logical —
Shall I declare: for that my mind believes !

ABELARD

Ah, every day and every hour, dispute
And accusation, nowhere any man
To friend me and protect, not one in the world,
Save pupils powerless, to support my plea;
Admirers, yea; but none to lend me aid
Through year on, year of direst controversy:
A history of calamities tenfold!
Till at the last this sentence of confinement
For teaching truth! But, at the last and worst,
This sudden, unexpected refuge offer'd
(First instance of protection shown in life,
First kindness to the oppress'd from any man
Whose power could make the kindness practical)
In Cluny and from Peter! Still though half
Incarceration, judgment of the Pope,
Yet all the sting and shame absolved away;
And honorable leisure for devotion,
For writing (perchance, for teaching?) granted me,
To end my days of sorrow! Ah, the spirit
Breaks down within me, melts as ne'er before
With this new sense of human gratitude
Calming rebellion; warm humility

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

And meek acceptance taming arrogance!
I wonder at this Peter. But a man
Hath mediated 'twixt an hostile world
And Peter Abelard. The guardian name
Hath come between me and my punishment
With intercession. And I render thanks:
Thanks to the Saint and thanks to him of Cluny;
But, save a few with powerless goodwill,
Heart-thanks to no-one else the wide world through!

Oh, but the arrogance yet, yet uprearing;
The sense of persecution and the blame
With which I all the universe upbraid
Save him of Cluny and the favoring Saint:
Not Christ, not Heloïse excused at heart
From some misjudgment — oh, the blasphemy!
When, when shall I be soul-regenerate
And inly humble; then to see my life
As Christ perchance hath seen it, or as Peter
May see and disapprove and yet in pity
Move him of Cluny for the baptism's sake
To ward off and redeem from obloquy?
And Heloïse? I, in my chastities
Enforced of mutilation, to her love

ABELARD

Have long assumed the saintlier arrogance
Of sham asceticism; when my lust
It was which brought her to disgrace and dread!
Not hers the lust: that lamb unto the wolf!
And hers the love, who out of all mankind,
Even after such betrayal, clove to me
And every hour of these long sorrowful years
(Small blame, to call me cold, unsympathizing!),
Hath look'd to me for spirit-comfortings,
Advice and admonition momentarily
In every rule, in every utterance
Of counsel sent unto her fond request.
And she, her woman-appetite aroused
(Hath she not so, with dignity, avow'd?)
Once and for aye from virgin innocence,
How hath she borne in spirit as in body
To bide thus faithful to her pledge in God?
I tremble now before such purity!
But how atone, how even in sooth repent me,
Where sense of men's injustice rankles yet
(Of Bernard his untrain'd impertinence,
Who argues with a scholar though unschool'd)
And only from the world an one or two,
A mistress-wife, an abbot-advocate,

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Can in my soul command my soul's respect?
O blessèd Peter, I was born to strife,
To swift, sharp rancor and the hard retort;
My truth a proud possession and my love
A need of proud possession secretly!
When love was known, discover'd of men's eyes,
Felt I indeed some pride of public conquest,
The demonstration of my powers of lust
(Ah, in dispute, the public power of reason
Reflecteth glory on the disputant!),
But yet a chillness to love's ecstasy,
A weariness at such a common thing
(Which fain were private, secret treasure-trove)
As pass'd from tongue to tongue, a ten day's wonder!
How the hot joy was turn'd to ashen fear
For shrewd disgrace and the contempt of men —
Confirm'd in the conclusion: treachery
To match mine own and violence little worse.
And then the long, long years of bitterness,
Silent rebuke toward her whose beauty lured me
Unto mine own destruction and whose heart
Was burning-pure, a fiery-fine rebuke
Though dumb, a blame enduring to mine own!
O Heloïse, I now confess in Christ

ABELARD

There hath not been, for all thy mind's revolt
From service of the Saints, a sweeter soul
For Mary than doth rule thy Paraclete
To Christ's best glory. And my claim to God
Must base in being, through thee, the human means
Of showing thus the splendor of a faith:
Even if the faith, so shrined in heart-of-Eve,
Be more to me directed than to God
And therefore pitiful — sith I am I!
But, save by faith, I cannot help thee more.
Farewell! And may I dwell in death beside thee,
If so much Cluny friend me at the end!

Now and to true repentance of the mind
Which wants renewal, 'neath authority
(As hers a man's authority hath craved)
In Cluny. And from Peter shall I find it
(As she hath found it in my cold advice)
By temperance and chastity of reason
Learning toward other minds to bear respect
Despite misjudgment and impertinence.
This Bernard may be better than his zeal
For persecution would proclaim of him.
For mine was a warfare without sense within

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Of any wish to win enduring peace:
Fear, rather, of men's agreement, a desire
To stand alone in singularity
Of strange opinion and to base belief
In demonstration of a paradox;
In curst citation of the *Sic et Non*,
The disagreement, counter-statement found
In writings of the fathers, ridding thus
The thoughts from reverence, whilst within the heart
The goal of right adjustment was no more
And all was chaos in an anarchy
Of self-assertion — which could ne'er be true;
Because denying every other's truth
Though yet the very man were measure of it,
A Bernard even as an Abelard!
And God were nothing! If within were reason
And rightfulness (I never did deny
The Catholic faith!) yet all upon the tongue
Was arrogant insistence and contempt
Spoiling the message or the fruit of peace.
But now, the new protection breaks the pride
To gratitude, an homage unforeseen,
A tribute of the conquer'd character
Too unexpected when the combat raged

ABELARD

And every man's hand was against mine own.
'T is somewhat the surprise that breaketh through
The madness of a life-time; somewhat also
The suddenness of release from bodily fear
When fear had kept me cruel. Right or wrong
In doctrine, now the citadel of soul
Hath been surprised to a surrendering
Of strife, and by a generosity
Disarm'd where persecution had but steel'd
To bitterer contention! — Heloïse!
From him of Cluny have I learn'd the way
I could not learn of thee; though thou hast taught it,
Thou ever, whilst my soul was blind by pride
To love and love's true lesson in thy soul:
Thou, mistress and teacher in the path of God!

BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

OH, fearful failure! Everywhere the arms
Of Christ defeated; and the glorious host
Of soldiers of the Cross, in pitiful flight
Or desperate defence, but one by one,
Thousands by thousands 'neath the infidel
Destroy'd; till only sacrifice remaineth
In lieu of all the splendors prophecied!
And, under God, was I, the meek Bernard,
High priest and prophet of the cataclysm!
I shrink aghast at visions of dismay
Brought home and desolatingly retold
And told again, with curses on my name,
Of them who hardily escaped and sped
Hitherward, the mad wreckage of the rout.
I fear not men's reprisals. Let them come:
Some crazed, ecstatic, devastated soul
Of knight or man-at-arms, to tear the cross
From bosom and on bloody spear impale
Bernard the sad impostor, false, forsworn!
Ah, Christ, if only it were such as that,
A death by martyrdom with them thus shared!
Scarce, scarce should I shrink from it. For to see

BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

Europe appall'd and stripp'd of glittering knights
And gleaming soldiers gone to wretched graves
By rusty tens of thousands, through my fault:
That is to dwell, O God, as in hell-fire
On earth and aye anticipate the End!
Yea, 't is the spiritual pain which easeth not
For that 't is tongue of mine upon the earth
Hath stung men to this havoc wantonly!
Where, now, the sense of sustenance by Thee
Provided in the preaching: outwardwise
By miracle, by conversion; inwardwise
By truth-assurance and the righteousness
Of rescuing the Christian warrior-power
Which, bruised and batter'd of the infidel,
Threaten'd collapse — as come upon it now?
Where, now, the human confidence, which seem'd
So superhuman, so inspired of Thee?
Lost, lost but with the human panoplies
Of power and purpose to effect the right;
Gone with the hope of victory! — O God,
Must human faith be brave for works alone,
For outward evidence to heat the hope;
And pale to skepticism and blasphemy
Because the expected earth-accomplishment

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Hath somewise else and in another sphere
Perfected prescience of Thy Providence
Than in the pettier plan mine hand design'd?

The pettier plan! Merely to aid a power
Grown evil as the veriest infidel
In purlieu of the worse-than-Moorish stews
Where Frankish Templar or a Flemish prince
Oppress'd and pander'd, with disgrace to all
Call'd Christian, in Thy land of sepulture?
Merely by tumult of a ribald crowd
(Their sin-remission crass-miscomprehended),
Of rough and roystering men and women lewd,
To aid in riveting on the Holy Town
Of Thy nativity an iron guile
And craft and lust of power which no bright
cross

On breast or armlet could redeem in men
Unless by Thine inscrutable chastisement?
Ah, holy in petty purpose for the nonce
By exaltation of the moment's oath
The takers of the Cross; and holier now
(Their sin-remission splendidly achieved)
Who, sacrificed unto Thy chastisement,

BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

Lie dead, unburied on the parching sands
Or in the rocky gorges food for kites —
Of these the bones are noble; for they fell
Obedient to the larger call of God
Transcending human purpose: and are saved!
So, of the many miracles: no whit
Dishonor'd in the infinite defeat
Of that they seem'd to guarantee to men!
So, of the preaching: righteous to the last,
O God, that I discover by Thy grace
(And firm shall preach) the infinite chastisement
Of them who perish'd; and of us surviving
Who see our homeland desolate, our knights
And men-at-arms no more, and every hearth
Mourning a vacancy! Oh — should there come
An halt, a blind, a man possess'd, to ask
Anew the healing miracle — with faith
Even as or e'er thine awful punishments,
Shall I but pray: and Thou wilt ope the eyes
Or cure the cripple or cast out the fiend;
That, when comes knight-at-arms to hew me
 down,
The miracle-achieved shall turn his soul!
And, with me openly upon his knees,

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

That cow'd crusader, humbled utterly
And saved, shall pray Thee as in brotherhood
Of chastisement accepted: I and he
Alike rebuked, alike to sight restored.

FRANCIS OF ASSISI

God's poor; and Jesus Christ the chiefest of them,
Supreme in service, if but ill-equipp'd
(Unless in Godship!) so to minister;
I, little friend Francesco, like to Christ
In poverty, if wanting Godship to it!
For poverty at least, that power is mine:
No stone's-weight of an impotency, born
(Mock-Damiano, ever to be built!)
Of the need of self-protection: burdensome,
Or, by the privilege of personal stand
Against aggression, arrogating pride;
No vaunt of value for myself to hoard
Of world's respect, precluding brotherhood
With very lazar; and such brotherhood
By love, my high responsibility
Unburdensome, uplifting everywise!

Could one but love world-riches, then, o' sooth,
Might service lie with such in squandering
To charitable use; as, at the first,
I flung the proud cloak off to clothe the back
Of starving valor! Nay, but love no whit

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

May dwell with pride: and pride is property. —
Ah! little sisters of the woods and fields,
Sweet flowers; or tiniest songsters unto God,
Ye brother birds! with ye community
Of goods and heart is mine: free from all care
Of worldly profit, free so to praise Christ
As joy and blessèd beauty in ye praise Him;
And joy in me (if scarce the wonder-gift
Of beauty) praiseth ever constantly.
Lo! here in the forest-hermitage I harbor
(Alvernia, where kindness lets me lie)
Like bird or flower by the dew of God
And bounty of the heavenly hand of Christ
Meekly sustain'd at table of the poor,
The wild, the free fraternity of joy.
And with my heart and tongue I'd praise the Lord,
Like as the bird or blossom praiseth Him;
I, fain to make laudation now aloud
With thanks for every creature; most of all,
Perchance, for me that I thus may ensoul
Some hours of contemplation, whilst the body,
My soul's dull, plodding bondman (hands and
feet
Scarified and world-weary), take that rest

FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Which labor-long infirmities require
Ere once again to labor it return.

Ah! pride pervert, maybe, and property
This rest from labor in a private joy!
How deem me poor and free from arrogance
(How deem mine, love?) who have one mine own
For contemplation of the cure of Christ
And praises creature-like unto His name:
When cures of earth, to saving of men's souls
In freedom of devotion minist'ring,
Are calling, calling from the neighbor-plain
Below my mountain, calling to mine heart
For saving service, as to Christ's own heart
The world was calling, calling: that He came?
For thus this love in me, if ne'er in Christ,
This very love when sensed unto itself
And felt for spirit-privilege (indeed
As never in Christ's ministry!) becomes
Itself a source of arrogance, a pride
And property which, for the love of love,
The heart must squander charitably away
Or leave the soul in contemplation sunk
Aloof as never lay the life of Christ

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Aloof from sympathy of hand, of feet
Forever walking over the wide world
In sacrificial ministry unshod. —
Ah, woe! then, for mine order'd Brotherhood
Of souls too rich in love to salve that love
By urgent sympathy of hand, of feet
In missioning unto the earth's confines,
Squander'd to lose itself sufficingly
In act, in motion-mendicant (creating
Of other men alms both and love) or labor
Alms-giving and alms-given to the need
Of nature, frail and empty save of need —
In act, nor turn upon itself within
In contemplation privily and proud!
Ah, woe! for power and riches spiritual
(The heritage of them who follow me,
By my default); alas, for arrogance
Sprung of a human love that finitely
Must turn upon itself and fail to spend
Infinitely in service and be poor!
What have I done, who, turning hearts to love
And service, have evoked within the soul
Vainglory of such service and the pride
Of love-possession, though in Christ enjoy'd?

FRANCIS OF ASSISI

The Christly crucifixion (wounded hands
And wounded feet world-ruptured), caused it this?
The purpose of apotheosis, through
Theophany, transfiguring, but wrought it
That men by God-example (infinitely
Spending, all-unpossessing) should be prick'd
To pride of service, wisdom of the tongue
In praise of His creation, but no jot
Impell'd to service of the hands and feet
In self-unsaving, perfect poverty?
Are these: these marks of helplessness in man,
Of dream-tied desuetude of hands and feet
Self-suaging (these toil-blister'd hands and feet
Way-scarified which here luxuriate
Taking their ease aloof from cures of men):
The outcome human and contemptible
(If anything in life can earn contempt?)
Of those world-wounded but unwearying
Crucified hands and feet, mine ecstasy
Perceives in vision through the forest-boughs
Cross-like and quivering with an heavenly light,
His stigmata of utter sacrifice?

Down from my mountain to the humbler plain

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

(Now at the last as when Christ call'd me erst
To lifting of San Damiano's stones!)
I haste me; here upon my feet and hands —
I feel them for spur both and punishment —
The marks of impotence, the stigmata
Envision'd of Christ's perfect sacrifice.
For hands and feet from now unto the end
(Not flower-like, bird-like — though perchance they
too
Feel care and failure? — nor for private power
Of love-possession but, with fault avow'd
Of failure, insufficiency to serve)
Shall serve Him as at table of the Lord
From Whom life all is alms, at beggary
Of love, for love's sake: not for any joy
In primal brotherhood with bird or flower
(Save labor unto death be joy and praise
Permitting song aloud an labor cease not?) —
Ah! not for any joy with bird or flower
Of little friend Francesco praising God.

FREDERICK II, HOHENSTAUFEN

MAGNIFICENCE almost miraculous
Of promise and performance I command:
I by a word redeeming from the blame
Of Paynimry this Holy Sepulchre
And these waste places of Jerusalem!
Not armies nor the valor of Christendom
In decades hath accomplish'd for the Cross
What sane sagacity and temperate zeal
With tact of reason and a wise respect
Toward honorable enemies have wrought:
I treating honorably with the chief
Of Paynimry, opponent of the Cross
No doubt, none less a king to whom respect
Is ever due from Order's champions
Of faith and of right dealing in the world.
King, quotha, unto whom respect is due
Although in arms against the Cause of Truth!
King, quotha, how much more to whom respect
Had been accorded had his cause been mine:
As Order's champion I of Cross and Truth!
And am I treated with respect thus due
To virtue and power and accomplishment

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

(A virtue firm beyond ascetic shams,
And naturally in joyance exercised!)
In service of the Cross, in thereby saving,
Not selfishly the soul but, for mankind
The Sepulchre and sweet Jerusalem
From infidel defilement? Or am I
Reviled as outcast, worse-than-Saracen,
Because, forsooth, my merits make alarm
To him mischosen Shepherd: Roman wolf
Rapacious over Christendom and hateful
Of Christendom's crusading conqueror now? —
Templars and Hospitalers and the swarm
Of sycophants pontifical, avaunt!
Leave to my care the conquest ye but hinder'd!
Clutch with your claws no crown belonging to me
By right of royal marriage as by rule
Of personal possession! By no Pope
Nor Papal hirelings shall I be debarr'd
From kingdom won by king-sagacity.
Ah, nobler Sultan, rather had my rights
Drawn warrant and support from thy bared sword
In honest enmity to overcome
Than earn establishment from Romish troth
In bull embodied! — Excommunicate

FREDERICK II, HOHENSTAUFEN

(Scorning the priestly, futile interdict
Which would rob Christendom of all I've won!)
I glory in the hatred of a Priest!

Kameel! ah, how might thou and I allied
Restore world all to order, make of East
And West conjoin'd a sanctuary of faith,
Right dealing and respect where such is due!
What matter if Mohammed or the Pope
Be God's vice-tyrant, when our meeker Christ
Gives unto thee or me alike, I ween,
Leadership in a soul's nobility:
Thy teacher second only unto him
Of Mecca, as my Second-unto-None!
How were the world revived, if under us
Jointly and severally controlling earth
To earth's own good and joyance naturally
Arose a new religion, vivified
And vivifying by the soul's release
Both from this internecine strife of creeds
And from the incubus of priest and Pope!
Now, by my vow to serve the Christ's true Cross
Unservile of the Pharisee of Rome,
What duty were more chivalrous than this

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

To disestablish tyrannies of soul
And set a loving liberality
Of generous sympathy with humankind
Toward every human enterprise and strength
In stead of priest and wolfly parasite?
By mine investiture as Knight-at-Arms
And by this crown of Christ's Jerusalem
My high inheritance, shall I not swear
A reign of brotherhood and beauty born
Of practice and perfection in all arts,
All ways of exquisite urbanity,
All understandings of the facts and laws
Of mystic informations yet occult
But under such prospective patronage
Become the illuminating discipline
Of many? Like justice, shall not poesy
(With spells and power over spirits of Hell
Learn'd of the lyric Semite) be for boon
And birth-gift of men's souls beneath my sway,
United in a novel Christendom
Half-Saracenic, half of ancient cults
(Hellenic or Mithraic, Osirian!)
Restored; yet wholly in the love of Christ
And lore of His inheritance transform'd?

FREDERICK II, HOHENSTAUFEN

Kameel! ah, could thy hand but crown me now,
How graciously might thou and I achieve
The rebirth of the luminance of soul
In disestablishment of him of Rome:
Ascetic dotard, Caiaphas two-faced,
Frost-blight upon our flower of chivalry!

Wolf-blight, alas! upon the Christly fold,
With age-worn fangs still fasten'd in our flesh!
Why waste I hours of proselyting here
In Palestine: a land which well might lie
Smiling beneath the Paynim scimitar
For aught concerning Europe; and which best
Might serve for stimulus of intercourse
'Twixt Saracen and Christian humanizing
World-civilization, were our arms withdrawn?
Why waste I here the hours Gregorius
Doubtless improves to poison hearts at home
Against mine orthodoxy, to impugn
My fair faith and incite a treason in them?
Why waste I for this bauble of a crown
(Or publicly to prove my Christianhood
Forsooth!) such moons as may from all my stars
Withdraw beneficence; whilst he of Rome

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

With subtlest machinations undermines
My power of empire and ascendancy
At home? Kameel, ah, never can my home
Be far from Sicily; nor heart of mine
Forget the boreal burg that bore my race!
Let generosity relinquish here
The conquest, for thy hand to seize again
The governance which thy straightforward faith
Hath shown thy due — ay, only with the crown
When once I have been king'd by mine own hand.
For then to Rome, to Rome (these mistresses
May follow whom Kameel hath promised me);
To Rome, and crush to earth with iron heel
The serpent of the Papacy! To Rome,
Ruin and devastation in my train!
That from my throne secure I lean at last
The hand of brotherhood to thee, Kameel;
And Christian fellowship; establishing
Peace and the power of the mind of man
Athwart all seas; and joyous chivalry,
The rule of love, true service of the Cross!

VILLON

'A VAGABOND'? — You good Samaritan!
Peace to your fears of personal compromise!
No Provost nor no gibbet will hang you!
You catch no foul infection of the plague
On fur and velvet, ay, and glittering chain
(The jewel likes me; but, hands off, I say!)
Helping me here to bread and wine for once
A bellyful; no vagabondage smirching
Your stiff, respectable, rich smile and style,
Unsmirchable by rags and tags of mine!
Sir, that you seem to fear contagion, shrink
From contact with the soul you stoop to save
(Just lifted from the oubliette of Meung
By grace of Louis whom the Saints preserve!)
Puts me in mind to make demand what show,
What substance in this soul of mine you'd save
Or rat-bit carcass that contains my soul
First proved effectual in appeal; what folly,
Freak, rant and posture of the vagabond,
The tavern-ruffler and the loose-of-life
Fresh from an unjust Churchman's dungeoning,
Drew dignity so to stoop to-purpose, lift

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

And lave and lay 'mid dignified disdains
Raggedness and this outcast of the ways?
Friend Charles of Orléans cared not as much
For the better brother-rhymester he well knew!

Was it some sense that raggedness hath rights
Of raggedness, a claim to the world's regard,
In person of the mercer prosperous,
For its custom of abhorring custom, style
Of no-style, stiff decorum (call it so)
Of rough contempt for your decorum's lore?
Now must the plain corroboration, proof
That vagabondage but accepts for due
Merit of vagabondage your main zeal
In sanctifying, lifting, stiffening me;
Now must this recognition how your guess
(Your jest?) proves intuition and I show you
No spark of gratitude toward grave reform:
Must such fulfilment turn your love to loathing,
Sour your pity to this pitiful fear
Of soul-contamination (did I say
The fear of the public executioner?
Far be the insinuation!) that you judge
(Ah! pardon the harping on the hangman word!)

VILLON

Your act no kind cure of a crusted soul
But a succoring of the harden'd gallows-rogue
Quite inappropriate to the pledge you hold
(A vow, mayhap, for some sin? Oh! my master,
I mean no crime beyond a trick of trade
Strictly absolved by sharing of the spoil!)
Of Christian charity toward — scarce toward me
Who, hard of heart as hard of head, laugh back
Your platitudes preach'd by the Prior, no doubt
(I heard them at the University,
A pest on't!) back upon the hide-bound brain
Of you who not once dream'd there might be souls
That chose to sin because the sin rings true
And makes a brawler's ballad; chose and choose
To follow a glint, such as the glint may be,
To the bitterness, the brilliance, of the dust?
I have an absolute pardon, sir, fire-new;
And fear not Informations! Let me talk
In lieu of silence these so many months.
Tabary swung for too much talk; not I,
With kind King Louis in my wallet here.
(Unless? Unless? The girdle likes me much!)

We part, then? Yet, in thanking you for succor

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Such as my need imperative demands,
Purseful and bellyful and brain stuff'd full
With pictures of the Paradise you paint
(I'll put it in a rondel overnight!)

For foil against the Hell I choose to choose;
Yet, in acknowledging my boon of you —
I pray you, master, seriously for now! —
I acquiesce in no disparagement
Personal of the beggar that I am:
Who beg from the rich to give to the poor (glib cant
Is parcel of mine impertinence!) my friend,
Who take of you by power of abject need.
For with the satisfaction of the need
Goes no confession of the need's disgrace!

Sir, what were your vain wealth and self-resource,
Even to the sham soul of a prosperous man
Bound in a vow — ay, by such very test! —
But for the vagabondage you abhor,
Prescription, intercession, to your sins;
By field for penance or by charity
Best justifying riches and world-ease?

I'm the arch-scapegoat. For 't is a life like mine,
Life for life's sake, no vulgar gain in view,
That yields you well-behaved and prudent men

VILLON

Prosperity of body as of soul,
Power in both sorts, through emptiness for me.
And now: I have not made my way in the world —
I put a euphemism as would Charles,
Though with mine own mad irony beneath!
So, because wealth has stoop'd to succor me,
I was supposed to wake at last to the worth
Of custom and convention in the world
And this the enviable that goes therewith;
Avow mine error, mend; and make my ways
Your ways, outstrip remorse by some reform,
Accept gratuity through zeal to earn
Position, independence; fain to pay
Gratuity back and quit the claim? Nowise!
I grasp gratuity for greed's own right
An you will: nay, rather, for your soul-need of gift,
Need of the unreturning charity;
The worth of ingratitude, and grandest gain
By the gift of good regardless of good end
(Unless in salving of your private sin!)
Succoring raggedness for succor's sake
And the right of vagabondage to go free.
Sir — for hyperbole! — 't is you who shrink
Aside through byeways from the walk of the world

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Even in your 'broider'd costume of world-style:
You laboring ever for an end in view
Beyond work; rest and recompense and power:
Ay, in this world or in a next, a goal!
You in your servile goal-dependence spurn
The world's real way of life for life's sole sake
(And at the last some mocking testament!)
Life asking no reward, but just the commune
In brotherhood of all else who live thus
Above the fear of failure, quite beyond
Your personal compromise though bishops starve
And provosts hang me for the cure of crime!
'T is your soul starves the soul in me despite
Alms; for your charity yet shames the soul.
Ay, 't is because of you who'd work for ends,
For purposes and prospects, that I fail
Rescue the world and need your rescuing!
Sir, did the whole world, Paris here and Blois
Where Charles lies in his dotage, rotten-ripe,
And Meung with its good bishop — curse him! —
 dwell
As I have dwelt in wide community
Giving and taking as I give and take:
Because, by yielding gift of all we have,

VILLON

A ballad or a rondel it may be,
Deserve we limitless bounty, benison:
Then were the wisdom of the ways of you
No wisdom; stigma of the vagabond
Your due; and vagabondage recognised
Wisdom, the moral and the strict and right,
Sanction'd and custom'd through new peace on earth,
Needing no gibbets; nor no charity!

Nay, master, for the succoring have thanks;
Not thanks as for obligation due the great
From humble vagabondage, yet for grant
Of opportunity to loose my tongue
Long-used to dungeon-silence! Ah, one's creed
Needs stating sometimes in a forthright prose
To rob the rats of breakfast and exalt
The beggar a little above his bread! I go
Ranting, profaning — if you call it still
A blasphemy, what care I? Write me down
For the Provost's galaxy of cunning scamps
(In faith, the Provost knows me very well!
And by more names than one the pardons read
Of blest King Louis whom the Saints uphold!)
This scamp a cunningest; who hoodwink once,

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Never again so long as wrath endure! —
‘Heretic’? ‘Platonist fellow’? You’d retract
Half your donation? Take it, in despite
Of the truth of this I’ve just exhorted you
Of the utter thanklessness of poethood!
What? No resentment? I will keep the gift;
Count so much toward the cure of your kind soul,
Respectable, prosperous, but none the less
Samaritan toward graceless vagabonds!
My duty to the Provost when you meet! —
Nay, by your leave, the chain and jewel too!

CHARLES V

OH, vast, imperial and vain regret
Wherewith am I tormented; this mine office
(Whose woes and burdens would I fain put off
For sack-cloth of the cloister of the soul)
Distracted with the mad, rebellious wars,
The heresies internecine sprung of him
With whom, when at the Diet sore blaspheming
Him held I in my doom-pronouncing power,
I kept a pledge, an oath misfortunate
Of too secure return unto his friends;
A pledge miskept with heretics, an error
Which very faith and truth from out the earth
(Unless God by new servants intervene)
May some day drive and utterly destroy:
Witness the shameful tolerance decreed
To which I yield consent in sad defeat!
Ah, woe! that I, by private troth compell'd,
A fancied individual honor bound,
As Emperor with God's great world in charge
Thus falsely and thus faithless to my trust
Bare sanctity of a fealty but human
Above the duty and service owed to God!

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

'T is this which drives me now to my despair
And proves me fit but unto abdication
(Though still be many a task to undertake —
First, first to drive the French from ravished Metz!),
Acknowledging by penance in abasement
The ever-cumulating consequence
In spiritual pestilence, alas!
Born of my soul's infection when I proudly,
Mistakenly to privilege of reason
Clove in a knightly, upright honesty
Forsooth as my misguided judgment held;
Though God's imperial obligation urged me
(And many a secret, sacred hint from Rome!)
Unto the perjury for Christ's faith's sake!
Ah, thus the Holy Father's legates prove it
With closet-exhortation hour by hour
My fault indubitable; whilst, too late,
I can but now resolve my soul to save,
Sobeit possible to the steward fruitless,
In cloister'd meditation to the end
That earth shall shake under a surer sway!

How miserable the frowardness of man!
How pitiable, were it not so base,

CHARLES V

Mine insolent self-reliance, when the world
Had sudden need of new obedience,
The Christian need of crime unquestioning
When by the Church commanded! I was born
Heritor of a thousand hard-won years
Wherein the individual sanctity
Of personal oath (for all the cunning tongue
Of Machiavelli with the serpent-craft!)
Had for a bond of troth 'twixt man and man
Securely been establish'd; that my soul
With sense of high-achieving chivalry
(No fealty absolving them beneath me
From knightly dealing with the least below!)
Was nurtured and sustain'd within a world
Where honor only, save a saving creed,
Seem'd worthy of a kingly character
Too often forced by circumstance untoward
To tyrannies still honorably plann'd.
And into such a world was I indeed
Born to an universal heritage
Of power well-nigh imperial; then, by gift
Of God's grace and the election crown'd o'er-all
With absolute opportunity to rule
And guard the world unto the glory of Christ;

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

And absolute responsibility
In temporal things, the comings and the goings,
The words and deeds (so be they honorable)
For king-command subjected to my will:
My wish, the heir-adopted gerentwise
For overt will of God; and at my hand
The Holy Father to pronounce of well
Or ill within our body spiritual!
What outlook had been nobler, wiselier plann'd
To make of man, of me the Imperial King,
Paragon of a splendor rightly ruling
Each rising and each setting 'neath the sun?
What heed, the hates of Francis or his warfares?
What heed, the machinations many a time
Of England or the Paynim at the gates
To fend, when with an all-imperial statehood
And principalities earth-numberless
Was I for praise and blame ripely endow'd
A steward to an heavenly mastership?
Yet was I froward, too man-blind to see
And so accept the honor-withering flame
Of Christ's new dispensation as it leap'd
A lightning-tongue to my new age on earth;
I was too knightly-proud (a Sigismund

CHARLES V

With that Bohemian who came to nought
Did better in his bitter perjury!),
I was too prince-upright alway to allow
Within the fox-skin of a Romish priest
The real, infallible holy-fatherhood
Whose guidance were unerring. Stood I forth
Against desires of Clement, sack'd his Rome
With soldiers of the brood of Wittenberg
And flung in prison his person sacrosanct
(In sin begot and crown'd in simony!)
Or kept faith with a traitor to Christ's church:
The same inestimable error made;
The pride of individual kinglihood,
The knight-on-oath, the manhood-chivalry
Merely — when every tittle of human judgment,
Of self-reliance 'gainst authority,
Had rightly in God's vice-gerent drown'd away
To rise above the flood of dim opinion
(With fear of the shame of blushful Sigismund!)
And maelstrom of the privy conscience-gleam
To firmament and white, unfaltering light
Of Christ-resolved perplexity, by rescript
Indicted of the Pope-authority
For sign of the new-born epoch upon earth

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

(Obedience now in lieu of kinglihood)
Releasing, overriding the mere troth-plight
Of earthly knight and mundane Emperor!

O monk of Wittenberg, whose arms but now,
Despite mine honor-prizing all-too dear,
Drove me from Innsbruck to a foul disgrace,
How have I taken thy part; in holding back
The clouds of omen'd priest-craft-tyranny
(So useful too in mine estates of Spain!)
Brought down the deluge of a civil strife
With victory to thy crime! Though thou be dead
Too late to stay the damage of thy daring,
Hearest thou not in Hell (where I soon with thee
May for my fatal frowardhood aye anguish!)
The tramp of thy fiend-legions, I first loosed
When for the right of conscience of a king
I kept against a Pope's divine desire
Mere oath and honor? I my soul had saved
From everlasting torment; I the earth
Preserved from everlasting sacrilege
(May God through His new heirs yet intervene:
My deep, dread, heartless son, my brother mighty!)
Had I example set of absolute faith,

CHARLES V

Endured disgrace, the private perjury
Of burning thee in life as now thou burnest;
And sacrificed my temporal fame to God:
The dedication (which the times demand
In their new culture of a tyranny
To match rebellion) which I felt too dear
Till now in vain! O monk of Wittenberg,
Whose Hellish power perchance bewitch'd my spirit,
A king even and an heart imperial
Hath acted as by conscience-fealty,
Thy motive in rebellion; and must feel
(For honor lieth in God's authority!)
How miserable the vast regrets of men!

BACH

AN earnest piety preventeth me
(Dear God! but there are moments of despair,
As hours of exaltation verily!) —
An earnest piety preventeth me,
If I may meekly boast a grace of Christ,
From trivial petulance. The patronage
Of my respected prince enableth him
Who serveth loyally the churchly muse
To labor without fear of too strict want
In effort toward the heights; undestitute
Yielding his tongue to utterance sublime,
So much as may be in the depths of him
Half-inarticulate, without dismay.
And can the servant of a favoring prince,
Afforded with the daily provenance
For family provision and the fees
From funeral performance, crave of right
Anything further — maintenance, reward
Or recognition? For, behold! I brood
Not quite in irony but realizing,
If scarce with snug complacence, gratefully
Indeed mine ease of fortune by God's help

BACH

Assisting mine ambition to speak amply
The music in me for acknowledgment
Of heaven's favor! Shall not daily dole
Suffice, with something of a shrewd respect
From all less courtly folk, to crown the Court's
Composer and Precentor of the School?
'T is true that of the Bachs mine own success
Is somewhat over average; that my name
(In shame I smile, the fact perforce avowing!)
Is gradually growing, sure I see,
More widely known than any of my kin;
Even as, maybe, my music richlier moveth
Than music hitherto in homelier days
Composed, perform'd of my Thuringian clan.
And is not this enough of outward show;
And comparable quite to my deserts,
Sufficing to permit the spirit to sing
Who in herself cares nothing for these things
Save as the bodily life hath need of them?
Mine organ and my clavichord apart
Can take in idler hours from mine hand
The meaning of mine heart which moveth me
So much, so almost unaccountably
With seeming-holy fervor; and in my work

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Which busies me by grant of God and man,
God giveth satisfaction. Then, what more?

It is not that the pettier jealousies
Of consistory or of scholars clash
Too much with inspiration (an we call
My yearning to compose in piety
Church-themes an inspiration?) nor the cares
Of many, many mouths given mine hearth
For succor and support (my wife here yieldeth
Help meet unto the need) cling me too close
For freedom. These are things of human hate
And human love, the common privilege
Or burden, it may be, of all mankind
Each man in sort; which, though they move me
not

To wrath nor wantonness, yet endlessly,
As I must feel in mine especial part
And privacy of pure musicianhood,
Contribute to a reverential zeal
In service of a Love by sacrifice
Triumphant over Hate: a service couch'd
In sequent-harmonies canonical;
Each tone, in yielding place, affording proof

BACH

Of purport consonant, although diverse;
And thereby passion pictured without pain
Of self-reluctance in the yielding note;
And thus a symbol of the art I'd owe,
Its very image and presentment, given
For stimulus within the daily round
Which else had been, or fain had seem'd, at
surd

To mute mine utterance in soul's despite.
That, though I picture Passion, no complaint
(More than in Christ was personal complaint
Though all in victory was yielded up!)
Of petty cark, responsibility
Nor any sort of hindrance, can arise
Within my spirit whose natural pietism
(I mean not any creed unorthodox!)
By grace of God as I may meekly claim
Preventeth, as I've said, all petulance
Or derogation from humility;
Whate'er the artist-irony, despair
Or exaltation which may dwell therewith.
Yet sometimes are there stirrings (very Christ
Appeal'd unto the Father!) — might not God
Achieve through music something of a truth,

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Some more replete harmoniousness, maybe,
Which pettiness and privacy alike,
For all the incessant motion of the mind
And aggregation of the scriven'd sheaves
Of the music-elemental culture-heat,
Seem doom'd to smother; He working for the truth
(As God through Luther work'd beyond the man
Two centuries now since, unto all time!)
In some way largelier, more to reach mankind
(Haply my Mass may reach more creeds than
mine!)

With universal scope, than now by me;
And yet I be His instrument, as now
This organ is mine instrument of soul?
Dear God! mine were Thy Power if so wouldst
Thou

Vouchsafe to me, the henchman of Thy song,
A mission, universal angelhood,
The masterful apostleship to lands
Beyond our sunset lying or to times
Franchised, enlighten'd far beyond these days
Of niggard skepticism and the clouds
Of creed-made tumult of the nations rent
With bitterness of half-belief in Thee

BACH

Its churchly, temporal establishments
At variance each in jealousy! If Thou,
Arrived at majesty in purports new,
Wouldst let me speak when Christ were else a
name

As for mistake and failure; to bring back
The lost of Israel from their sands of cant
By music of the cosmic fructifying
Of Thy sphere-motions, as the years to-come
Shall learn them for the thoughts within Thy mind
Who veilest in all things else Thy Heart from man
Save Law and architected Harmony!
Dear God! if Thou couldst let me know this glory
Within me of futurity alarged,
If only while I work and rear, for Thee
Alone, the uplifts of an art no man
Hath yet in understanding! Oh! for, God,
I feel, if humbly, that within my moods
And ways of counterpoint there lurk such forms
Of intricate coincidence of tone
As even favoring princes would condemn
For reason of a novelty inborn
(A Reformation, unconservative;
Iconoclastic of mere piety!);

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Which subtler, curious thing of symphonies
And chordal canonism will scarcely come,
Confounding congregations, from the hand
Of native impulse wholly without help
Of public exploitation, as at Worms
Men's mortal opposition brought to birth
The appeal from self to God. Ah, if from God
Be sympathy expected, it is well.
And if to God be every hour appeal
As now in anguish of the splendor-spirit
His bounty puts upon me, it is well.
But might not God reveal such sympathy,
Accept and answer outwardly the appeal
(Not only with the fees of funerals —
Pardon the tragic irony of man! —
Or birthday ode upon some paid command)
In here and there insistence of a prince
On better than the best, demand of men
For fictions to confound a choiring throng?
It sure may be that God Himself hath ways
Of stimulation unperceived of him
(Mine organ knoweth not the reason of it
Though rendering right the urgency of my soul!) —
Of stimulation unperceived of him

BACH

Who followeth the gleam and still appeals;
Ways from within, yet also plausibly
By help unseen without: the future age
Which jealousies of churches generate,
Wherewith all earth's at labor and whereto
A man who loneliest strives may heart-attain
And dwell with unaware? Did even he
Incarcerate in Wartburg ever dream
Of Germany enfranchised, celebrant
As latterly, of his two hundred years?
But, oh! the open conflict and the power
Of emperies array'd against the man! —
With me, a scholar or a consistory!

Nay, nay! I have spoken with God and He hath heard
me

Out of the mood of pietist despair
And struggling exaltation ever mine!
Nay, nay! There is a work unto mine hand
Wherethrough a satisfaction and a sense
Of universalism stimulating
A soul fulfill'd, man's work unto mine hand
In training of my sons (wherewith my wife
Were more than merely helpful) and at school

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Some simpler truth to teach, passing adown
The Bach tradition out of Thüringen.
The Christ, the Luther, I may celebrate
And please my prince; but from myself appeal
Not publicly 'mid hostile emperies;
Yet privily: leaving the rest to God!

FICHTE

RISE up, rise up, O Teutons, and cast off
The Corsican; from ashes of the soul
Spring forth, fresh-Phoenix-like, and strike to ground
The towering eagle! Be the nation born
Of German folk to grasp a birthright-earth,
The heritage of men! Assert our strength
And claim to place in the sun! — But be there bounds
To just ambition and to vaulting power
A bourn of self-restraint: retrieving earth
By virtue of men's mutual respect
From these the shambles of the righteous strife,
The terrible probation needed now.
For, fellow-men, what saving were there made
Of earth, if from the tyranny o'erthrown,
The dragon's seed but of a fiery wrath
Had birth and in our throes of sacrifice
But strife and strife were bodied everywhile?
Leap to the freedom-carnage — there is need!
But hold within your hearts the brotherhood
(My creed must teach it, an ye understand!)
Of all who are, the stranger even as ye,
Exponents of the Godhead! Feel the truth

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

In absolute selfhood underlying each
Of Gaul as Teuton! Fight, sith fight we must,
The true war, slaughtering them the despot's hordes
But that for Frankish as for German youth
A new-enfranchised western neighbor-state
Smile at ye o'er the Rhineland! Oh, what grief,
Were once this splendid fervor of our folk
For freedom and for opportunity,
The wide world through, that spirit and spirit-truth
(Mistake not strength of law for despotism;
Well-knit, enlighten'd rule, for arrogant will!)
In each establish'd state, self-regulate
And neighbor-independent, overtly
Alone should reign — what desecrating shame,
Were this, the spirit-of-uplift in us now,
Which my poor words assist in stirring-on,
Were generous patriotism made the mask
For furious world-subjection! Shall we fight
Beyond the mountains of a German mark?
No, never beyond the Rhineland save to serve
The Frank by ruin of the despot there!
Shall Germany enfranchised prove a yoke
(A bitterer despotism than before)
To Frank, Iberian — as this crew hath been

FICHTE

Of him call'd Imperator — and blood-lust
Inflame us to be scourge of half the earth,
A second Hunnish plague of Attila?
Far be it from us! Rather had my words
Been smother'd in my throat, before their time
Choked down ere utterance, than my battle-taunt
Be taken for a cry of conquest here!
Brethren and fellowmen! Your enemies
Are fellows also. Let not Germany
For dint of one good deed blot out in the end
Heart-sense of wrong and right: as ill should be
(Alas! as now I fear it of our fury!)
Were sword and shot to be world's arbiters!
Ah! vision of a justice beyond ours:
Some overnational tribunal set
(The national privacy alway preserving!),
Some permanent conclave as of judges (each
Race-representative, by rulers chosen)
Arm'd only with the solemn treaty-oath
(Unsmirchable in honor to a world!),
Which no necessity could bid us break,
Of nation each with nations; to submit
Unto such rational arbitrament
The burden of dispute: that thus our shares

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Were beaten out of swords, and reaping-hooks
Be bent of spearheads; none be need of arms
Save guarding a law and order national
Against the evildoer! Thus, thus, o' troth,
Liefer than in arbitrament of dread
And death, were glory of our egohood
Achieved. Ah, friends! I have through my best days
(Who now by stress of tyrannies am driven
To this high ranting, rousing up the land) —
Through my best days have urged the inmost truth,
Scarce as of revolution by the mob
Nor as of conquest extra-national
But, of a strength of order, holding fast
For health domestic as for race-respect
A peace, that universal spirit-hood
Which binds all hearts together, keepeth faith
By honor and by generosity
Where oaths are (nay, where oaths are needed not
For honor) between man and man, and holds
One common intuition of God-kind
For basis of achievement. If our souls,
Each in its kind, must personally soar
To splendor of privacy, oh, not by will
Inflicted on the weaker but, by love

FICHTE

In art, in poetry the master-mind
(A Goethe, Schiller, surely showeth ye!),
Through cultural appreciation proven
Shall ease him of ambition! If our souls
Leap to the armament, O men, have care
Of the future culture of men's brotherhood
Which heeds well frontiers, in forbearance proud,
Deals fairly with our common humanhead!
Were it a dream-chimera? Must we choose
Or such enslavement as the Corsican
Hath planted on our necks; else or commit
Our children and our children's children after
To bitter armament, the frantic strife,
The desperate overbearing? No! That crime,
That world-crime worst against our fatherhood
Be far from this the spirit-fatherland!
And if bad hearts arise who would forget
Man's common birthright of the absolute-soul
Alike in each, 'soever otherwise
Be tongue from tongue; and if they conquest cry
And tyranny to desolated hearths
(Where, brotherhood forgot, no fatherland
Can claim a sonship) then to them turn ye,
O generations, not with lackeying ear!

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

But strongly daunt them with the reason-claim
Of generous furtherance I teach ye now:
I who must take, in all humility,
This risk, of one who rouseth in men's hearts
The tempest of an hatred, that it burn
Too hot to be extinguish'd but may lie
Forever smouldering, ah, flickering up
(Which faith forefend!) with breath of policy
And arrogant statecraft alway! — Yet be yours
The claim of aspiration spiritual,
The mission of emancipation now;
Carrying not desolation but relief
From burden; with the liberty of truth,
The freedom each to dwell in liberty
With truth for helpmate! Friends, the hour is come
(Now stirs the splendid Slav's new-saving strength!
The noble English, guardians of the seas,
Hover with white-wing'd aid!) — the hour is come
Of Germany's deliverance. Go ye forth;
Smite once and greatly smite: and smite no more!

SCHOPENHAUER

THE hour is bed-time; but the wine is good,
Warming, yet almost wholly feverless.
Yon viols sing-it soothingly, the 'winds'
Not too asseverative tame their throats
To moods in mystical complacency
Of contemplation whilst my limbs repose
Beneath their harmony and bask with them:
The melody of prelude! And my heart
Outreaches, takes (upon the stimulus
Of symphony within me and without
Releasing from long, nerve-rack'd harassment)
Inceptions novel, tuned unto the taste
Æsthetic of the momentary lapse
From tension and from irritance. I turn
No petulance now upon the pageant-thoughts
Which dream-like muster in the lamplit air;
Relaxing, I, to suave despondency
Well-suited unto genius at research;
The genius at research till haply wine
With music lull to luxury of sleep
Sans that bourgeois banality of bed
And boorish night-cap. And in open'd book

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Which suits so well by sugar'd sonneting
The melody of prelude, let me prick
For phrase that fits, some text unto the tune
Of thought : good reading matching the good wine. —

‘Music to hear, why hear I music sadly’,
When all the yearning of the will of the world
(The human burden-note, the nature-chord
Supportant summing-up the cosmos-scheme),
With scarce world's anguish'd unreality
Of intellect-presentment, sweetly speaks —
Ay, sweetly speaks, despite objective taint
Still archetypal of our misery —
In music wholly and therein alone?
Why sadly, when the will, as Will, were nought
Hedonic? Were it that the intellect,
Whereof perchance no auditor were purged
(Oho! am I of intellect now purged,
Who spur at truth-lists but in music's name?)
Nor musical creator quite exempt
In exposition to art's inwardness,
Through some machinery of sense impinged
In music as in aught else, outwardly
Interprets and infuses with a tint

SCHOPENHAUER

Of customary melancholy, taken
From visual imaginations, e'en
These tonal harmonies? Were it that we
(Whose speech is alway wondrously betwixt
Vision and voice, interpreting all insight!)
In no sort may escape idealism
Specific, individual in fine,
Howe'er disguised as though beyond the self,
Of the self-illusion? Though yon music make
(Expressive overtly of nothing known)
Appeal in uttermost not unto mind
But unto will's impersonality,
Warranted as by genus general,
Architectonic o'er Platonic types,
Of pure conatus in unconsciousness,
Must self with sensitivity intrude
(Sense, the sheer stuff, the raw material
Of ideality, as Locke hath shown)
To spoil all and announce with all life else
The world-delusion and delinquency?
Delinquent are we that the oracle
Of will-reality (cause veritable
E'en of curst consciousness) must yet, **unreal**
(For so in last resort unreal is all

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Law-semblant definition 'neath the shroud
Of space-and-time-form falsely causative —
How quaint my Kant combined with Gautama,
And yet profound beyond post-Kantian creeds
Of shallow solipsistic optimism!),
This pseudo-oracle of truth must yet
Within our fantasy denominate
Only the old illusion! How may we men
Hear music to approve us feelingly,
In the last freedom-effort of the heart,
Of universal failure, lo! nor weep:
Shamed of the sad insistence of the self;
Alarm'd at life's incapability
From life's illusions of a last escape?
Alas! allowing to efficient will
Some hope of nescience though the knower live,
Through art (the form Platonic brought to earth
Unwill'd save of the universal, felt
As truth) in music have I dream'd escape
(Music, the meaning of Pythagoras
When measure, number was declared the key!),
Hailing the hint of inarticulance
(Involved in mere numericality ;
And lack of literal allusiveness)

SCHOPENHAUER

For will-reality, of poignancy
Provided by conceptual emptiness
In concentration on the immediate mood
For unillusion, non-idealism —
Mistaken in a fond interpreting;
And feel now fervently mine hope betray'd,
And nothing save illusion, no escape
(Unless, as now, my nusus were appeased —
Ah! surely scarce in dreadful suicide! —
Ever in truth-perception geniuswise?),
No escape granted to the sensuous man
Wholly from unreality, allow'd
Anywise from the world-embodiment.
For even an hint, be it hint of what you please
Beyond the mind (even Fichte, fool enough,
Had sight of that!), implies yet consciousness;
And form of space-perception dominates
(Ha! Kant would have spared from space his moralism,
But could not, as my doctrine plainly proves!)
Still in the very "goal" of an "escape".
And I am sad while music mocks at me,
Who face the universal failure with
Discomfort of mistake and fair disproof!
As I treat all men else, so now in turn

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Music makes sport of genius in my frame,
Pronouncing error where was boastfulness. —
Fain from disproof would genius be debarr'd!
Fain would be proven genius in the adoption
Of the very truth found so discomforting!
Say, the new step be taken, from mistake
Freed by the very burden of disproof,
The spirit of genius saved bewilderment!
Say, all is veil'd, one woof of misery,
One warp of mystery and no escape
(Nay, not in utmost generality
Hyperplatonic of the objectivism)
From intellect's insistence of idea;
But most-abstraction lies but most remote
(As Plato's truths were still beyond the world)
From world-salvation merely and from truth,
Not from our falsehood and unhappiness!
Say, every loophole fancied of this life
(Even the Oriental necromancy
Of self-abstrusion, but approximately,
Not fully liberative from the thrall)
Stands stopp'd; and nought of any worldlessness,
Abstractly counter to the pure idea,
Pertaining to the will may be allow'd;

SCHOPENHAUER

And very will-reality but names
A central core, an accursèd fundament
(No thing-itself beyond our hedonism,
But equally with ideality
Topic of our despair as of delight)
From which might be no dream of mere escape
(Save genius be beyond bewilderment
Delighting in the new-won estimate
Of will-presentment, yea, of heart-idea?)
For Maia and our self-bewildering!
Then might I hear music less moodily
Which yields at least such fundamental truth
(For fundamental truth someway it seems
Though more, perchance, akin to Locke than
Kant —

Far be it from the Fichtean foolery,
From Schelling's charlatanry, Hegel's hoax!)
In proof of irretrievable dismay:
By being truth, ay, despite the truth's dismay,
None less a law whereof I were behoved
(Where'er it lead and wheresoe'er derived
If not from these Teutonic solipsists!)
Best to be proud in the possession, not
Cast down, below mere mundane melancholy,

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

With feelingful oppression. For if world,
As proved now by this music-maundering,
Even in hyperplatonism (extreme
Resort of objectivity) defy
Our artist-effort from self-tanglement
To free the world-will, even so must be
Some principle of understanding, power
Call'd forth in genius by the new demand
Of comprehension in me that entails
New explanation. Grant that music means
Through utmost generality of art
(Itself the hyper-art from mind remotest)
In some sort most approximately will
Clean of specific demarkation, world-will
Without will-world's idealism, and thus
(Spare me the Fichtean ego-inference!)
Yields hint of plausible freedom from a thrall
Of self-mistake, yet worst of all mistakes
Would be to blind heart to the strength of sense
So well descried of Locke and Kant alike,
Which even in instance of a beauty blind,
An art of tone sweetly unvisual,
Envelopes if by symphony of sound
With veil of miserable mystery.

SCHOPENHAUER

And from mistake, searching the secret things
For mastery, may genius be debarr'd!

Music to hear, so may I hear half-gladly
Roused for the nonce from suave despondency
As erstwhile from the accustom'd petulancies;
And fearing only some misinference
Too far toward Fichte in the strain'd revolt
So sudden from the accustom'd Hinduism
Of world-illusion and will-nescience!
Music to hear, so may I hear half-gladly,
By conscience of the hint contain'd of truth
Unusual, revolutionizing to
My doctrine, stimulating to the brain
Of one half-stagnate with entirety
(As none before me with entirety
Save Leibniz, stagnant in a dogmatism;
Or Berkeley, haply, whom the saving salt
Of sane subjectivism could not cure
Of Judaism's stale theology —
Ay, or Spinoza, at the best half-Jew!),
The brain lethargic with entirety
Of hitherto conviction. From thought's first
Inception of my system sprung full-arm'd

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

From my young front (and few, I ween, so young
Show'd thus mature!) hath small development,
Save if by confirmation — and, o' troth,
Hath all comparison with creeds extant
Of Hindu, Greek or Modern but confirm'd
My creed's superiority, till now
My genius grasps a growth within itself
Quite independent, as I stoutly swear,
Unfecundate of chance resemblances
To Fichte's superficiality
My riper penetrations so abhor —
From truth's first birth hath small development
Save evidential testimony ensued
To titillate intellection or require
Of genius exercise. 'T was daily but
The cataloguing of more instances
(As Aristotle wasted stupidly
Acumen too discursive citing facts
As instances of species yet unproved,
For all his logic categorical!)
In proof of fundamental postulates
Seemingly unassailable: the Will,
The World-Presentment and the Pure Idea:
A balance of the Two and Tertium Quid

SCHOPENHAUER

Someway arising in the brain (conceived,
Though feature of idea derivative
And so in need of warrant with the rest,
Yet mystically warranting the world
By secret union of idea and will —
My circulus in demonstrando — brain!);
And within World-Presentment (properly
Enough if, as it seems, Presentment be
Perchance all of my system that survives
Proof of sense-universal) elements
Of subject-self, of object-otherhood,
The true-face (saving that the private self
Were presence!) and the false-face of a truth
Intrinsically false in virtue of
The double-faced subtension. Such it was:
My world-solution; and therefrom derived
The mystic purpose to annihilate
Unto a world-salvation self and brain,
The inward and the outward privacy
Of individuation. But — at a gleam —
This music, and this moodiness aware
Of doubt and new denominations to
The well-worn platitudes. And I have proved
Myself, maybe (as erst all thinkers else

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

By my critique!), in error; and take delight
Strange in the sudden mockery of me
(Might I endure it on another's tongue?)
Which music hath induced. For, of a flash,
I penetrate 'Arcanas all unguess'd'
Derisively, anent the vaunted theme
Of flawlessness to my philosophy
Establishing counter-systems in a word:
I pleased thereby both for the cynicism
Of mine own goals-destroy'd and claims-decried
And for the feel of power in the insight
Of truth-perception fondly fresh-allow'd
(Despite this warning to my dogmatism!)
For fundament incontrovertible.
'T is slight, the change of sight, and yet how vast
The implication! Let me laugh (as might laugh
Kant at those earlier dogmatisms destroy'd!)
At recollection of the creed foregone
A moment since! Where now were vague Idea
(That echo of the falser Platonism
Beyond the genus-truth) or, echoing Buddh
With some extravagance, the vaguer Will?
The concept of sheer consciousness, o' sooth,
Supposed objective and sheer nescience

SCHOPENHAUER

Supposed subjective (this the very Real,
That the Ideal) conscience as of nought
And nothingness unconscenced given to match
Each void the other's vague inanity?
With music for the password to prove both?
Where now the music antinomial:
Pure objectivity of nothing known,
Pure nismus of a non-sense join'd within
Tone-harmonies alone (for visual
Imaginings, even of art, were still
Recognized terms of ideality
'Soe'er generic) tones excepted from
Otherwise universal rule of self
(Ah! how now shirk the Fichte-Schelling Self?)
The hybrid and her world sensational
Of mystery in mixture? Suddenly,
The assertion of the modicum of sense
(The sensuous fundament, heard or unheard)
In tone-creation, of the parallel
'Twixt voice and vision, and the paradox
Melts into marvel that it e'er had seem'd
Solution serious! Not one loophole left
For any inkling of a meaning, in
Experience the sole criterion, to

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Or selfless Will or objectless Idea;
To Will pure Reäl, nor illusionism!
But, in default of any severance,
A somewhat which all theories would mean
Which aim at unity and system, somewhat
Perchance which others (might they be those three
In chief I scoff'd at?) guess'd more close than I;
Somewhat associant, identical
With selfhood as with worldhood through and through
For the true Reäl, where nought is beside
For basis of deception, ay, for veil
Of Maia I fondly featured: somewhat shown,
No doubt, in some degree by all who seek
Fair understanding as their genius leads:
An union elemental through one system
(Temporal-spatial, ay, essentially)
Of subject-objecthood, of me and world
Within my personal; with personal will
For nexus of the worldhood-intellect;
With personal intelligence providing
(Not in an hyper-kind or genus-sort
Conceptualwise, but primely by perception
Interpreting unto self-purposes
The other-selves provisional of sense)

SCHOPENHAUER

The terms of selfhood's real assertiveness;
And Person, compounded of idea and will
Uniquely, for denominance of all.
And, where in music thus the person takes
(Scarce mythic Number of Pythagoras;
Which were but time without time-consciousness!)
Tone-interrelation felt discriminately
Whilst cognized as of self hedonicwise
By intimate mergence of these elements
Of system recognized identical
With world-self at expression (ay, reconstructed
E'en in the auditor who, too, creates —
If most by imitation), there finds the spirit
True satisfaction, scarce as by escape
From worldhood, not by nescience of the will
Obliterate from ideality,
But by world-realization outwardwise
As inwardly opening intelligence
To comprehension of the unioning,
To nexus in extremes, to terminism
In blind conatus; leaving nowise blind,
Nowise mysterious nor illusional
Nor veil'd of Maia, this our beauty-life
Of reconciliation, opposites

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Inextricably, thoroughly polarized
And constituting wholeness mutual.
How vast the implication from this seed
Of sense, this hint of solidarities
(I care not though the ear hear silently,
As now in momentary pause of sound;
For inward speech itself is sensuous-based)
Abiding even in music — sense itself
But worldhood least-avowed as of the person
(Most strict externalized in other-selves
Themselves scarce held in self's heart-sympathy),
Most unlike inwardness yet none the less
In rudiment systematic: the last straw
My drowning disrupt snatch'd at and was saved!
So from mistake hath genius been debarr'd,
Grateful for disproof by the music-mood.

Music to hear, thus hear I music gladly
(E'en from the mythus of my Shakespear freed!);
And from the gladness by irradiial gleams
Discover in all experiences else
The tinge of satisfaction hitherto
Quite undetected: that my pessimism
Seems a lost shadow, and itself alone

SCHOPENHAUER

Unreal, illusion'd. For where all is real
Which to the personal will hath meaning, what
Remains of old illusion yielding gloom
For dint of unreality? Where life
Is universal-mutual, what want
Of pure Idea, to clear, as I conceived,
The privy-wrought confusion; or what need
For necromantic abnegation of
A world proved truth organic? World and I
Alike are mutual-necessary, each
Essential, reäl with reality
Identical in the inter-reference,
Sufficing to criterion of an whole;
And so are warrantable each by each,
And thus a living music! — Yet, ah! how weary
The ear, now, at such stress irrelevant
Of yonder loud expulsion from the brass
Of booming-breath'd vibration! With what snarl,
Irritant to attentive petulance
Startled as out of prophecies in sleep,
Attest the viols their complainingness!
Ha! 't is a weary business, this of earth,
Sans all Arcanas worth the dreaming of;
A wear-and-tear without or let or cease

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Of each on other; sight or sound alike
(Even speech-thought, of both made up in base)
Only some friction of the jaded nerve!
À-bas, the foolish jest of joust for truth
When merely living is a strife enough!
Nought without sheer sensation! Oh, there crowds
In on the ruffled spirit such a storm,
Outraging genius in its inwardness,
Of interruptions and irrelevancies!
No heart-escape! No thwarting such a will
Inveigled in its cage inextricably
To crowd and jar, to push and be rebuff'd
The livelong eons of vulgarity
(Humanity and nature bourgeois both;
Whether supportant or at odds, what care?)
Call'd cosmos! Ah! would but the courage stick,
How swift I'd cheat things of their sport of me,
Checking their mockery with proud report
Of how I dared the nobler self-escape,
Destroy'd out of the world my saviorhood
Of wisdom scarce-appreciated: so
Abandoning their world-will to its fate!
Ah, well! I dare not. 'T is a question closed
And seal'd with doctrine how the true escape,

SCHOPENHAUER

Easy enough by contrast, were not death
But life's continuance in some will-less mood
(Possible to the ascetic saint, no doubt)
Of vacant contemplation! — Well, for me
Here was a will-wan mood æsthetical
(Born of a chance phrase in a much-thumb'd book
Which now I snap-to, pocket testily)
With contemplation but not vacantness;
With fantasy of Fichtean folly — faugh!
Yon breath in the brass, yon poignance of the strings
May seek and find escape, forsooth. But I,
My sad limbs stiff with these unyielding stools,
Surfeited now with music can but pay
Their stupid reckoning. — How much for bad wine?
Bah! 't is too dear! — And so am off to bed.

LINCOLN

THE people shall be trusted. Strong, though sad,
In confidence I must announce the truth:
Defeat, disruption of the nation now,
The disappearance from the face of earth
Of high democracy and government
By the people for the people evermore,
Now and forever — save the people come
Equally from all sorts in sacrifice
Of national service to the service-line,
With common blood unto the bloody front,
And face in absolute democracy
The time's necessity. For hitherto
Have but the bravest and the best stepp'd forth
To strip for freedom's ringside, leaving all
Of home and comfort and of life-career
Because a patriotism upsprung within,
A public duty felt and speaking in them
Prevail'd above all selfish obstacle
And drove them by compulsion of the soul,
By conscience to the terrible battle-front.
And this, despite democracy supposed,
Was worse than aristocracy; the best

LINCOLN

But flung in the breach. And of the best there be not
Enough to stem the tides of slavery;
Nor Union to posterity bequeath.
Yea, can democracy and liberty never
Turn to the world the trick of victory
Won and the right establish'd, save the crowd
(At heart too proud to cower beneath the shield
Of nobler natures) find in the fight at last
Their manhood and salvation, nobly dying
Where need is to make life nobler to live.
The people, if to learn to find their life,
Must be compell'd and at the dire need
Trusted to take equality of pain.

Equality of pain! Is that then all?
Or truly first when sacrifice is shared
Springs brotherhood? Shall I, the solitary,
So sorely friendless at the nation's head,
So nigh-unaided in its counsellings,
By Providence compell'd to every task
Of leadership alone (and so companion'd,
At worst, of Providence!), in taking on me
The terrible responsibilities
Now of the draft-conscription to make men

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Follow by sheer compulsion, not myself
At last, and for the first in verity,
Feel kinships and the strength of sympathies
With every man within the nation's bound
Who serves and learns to love beyond aught else
His country, that profound community
Of purpose to set freedom everywhere
Above compulsion in the hearts of men?
Strange, bitter-sad the purgative of God,
That they and I can only thus be free
And free of a common aim in sacrifice
By such compulsion: I, compelling me
To take upon my heart the infinite burden
Prescribed to the conscience as by Providence
Of forcing to the shambles brother-men;
But, thereby only, winning victory
And, thereby only, feeling brotherhood
Complete and innocence of tyranny
In the friendship of the faith that trusteth men
To learn the deep disaster to our faith,
To share with me the secret that there be not
Of best enough to save the earth for good. —
O Lord, couldst Thou, with malice unto none
And charity toward all, singly prevail

LINCOLN

By Thy high sacrifice; yet of mankind
No heart and soul prevail, 'soe'er high-placed
In men's preferment to the post of toil
And power that is responsibility,
No single will assume vicarious
The sacrifice, unless in leading now
All wills alike to yield with him their life
(For high resolve how none in vain shall die
Of them who, of the best, have fought and bled)
In immolation to the common weal?
Yet who of men did ever learn of Thee
Except through sacrifice? And this I bear,
This burden of compulsion over men,
The nearest is and dearest at the heart,
Most like religion to democracy,
Most like a crucifixion in my spirit
Of freedom, that it wholly rise again. —
I trust the people. Though my trust compel.

WAGNER

To them there is nothing plain till noon hath waned
On the deed: they could not learn though I might
teach them;

For wanted things alone they can conceive.
Whereas my spirit broods in the womb of dawn
On things not yet brought forth. Some sword they
need

Of hero whom their gods have never help'd
(The shatter'd sword which wants a forging-heat),
A heart not bound in everlasting law,
But fashioner of rule beyond their gods'
Walhalla fall'n in ruin! For he alone,
Heart-plunged in furnace of the welding world
By stroke on stroke fresh-forged unto the times
Were fit for deed which no god-kind can do,
Remote, estranged from the onward strength of men:
Deed which, but for the sake of gods or men,
Some Siegmund must befather! But they are nought
(Save only Liszt and Ludwig and a few!),
Inept to understand though all my mind
And heart and power of soul were flung before them
In music-pearls 'neath hoofs of the Hagen-herd!

WAGNER

The Hagen-herd who, hating, yet support
The gods of old by hating more the hero;
And, murdering him, had balk'd both men and gods!
Ah! Wotan! Wotan! thou at worst spak'st truth,
Though wrath inflamed thee with desire to break
Laws of thine own devising; though thy god-spouse,
Mere Fricka, frantic with the wrongs which Earth
Had wrought her by concubinage with thee
Change-fertile, Fricka, conservatrix still
Of canon, flaunted in thy face the rule
Of god-whim everlasting! But the lust-taunt
Inspired thee, pluck'd indeed from thy dull'd eye
(Clouded by that for which its mate thou pledgedst!)
The wisdom of the ages and allow'd
Insight prophetic of futurity!

For thou, O Wotan, with the swine who, for
The hate that is in them to the hero, laud thee
(These sycophants of canons classical)
Art pass'd: mightily pass'd and grandly so,
My soul avows; but, pass'd beyond all help
Save music of our humankind to-come
More than re-youth thee! May the true gods of song
Not fail in twilight sith tomorrow's dawn

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Hath gleam'd to a dayburst in the speech of me:
Song aye and song, though every critic flout
The flame-rush of me; though my every word
Deny, destroy the modes their morbid sense
Craves to its slumberous soothing!— Rouse and wake,
Thou fire-maid of my wish; that, greatly daring,
My heart, the unfamiliar of a fear,
Espouse thee and upon the morning-heights
Mouth to thy glory and splendor music free
And formulable but to the fashioning
Of the fearless bride-pair, me and thee, high maid!
And if, at end, over mine ashes roll
The green and deep tumultuous-pulsing Rhine
Of foam-new melodies, of harmonies
Snow-born of the mountains of a thousand dawns
And rhythmic passionings beyond the ken
Of aught now swirling in me; need the bright sun
Of this awakening heart to heart with thee,
Brünnhilde, mourn thy love for wasted, lost:
That thou with me — my funeral pyre of hope! —
Perishest and thine ashes with mine own
Sweep to an ocean of antiquity
Where both were nigh forgotten? Shall the wind
Of world-arousing in our challenge-horn

WAGNER

Echo in vain along the streaming crags
For that this magic cirque which binds us twain
Sinks to the glimmering depths; and bodeth silence?
Silence? Nay, love! I never swerved from thee
Nor thee insulted for the draught bedrugg'd
Of lips'-applause, success ephemeral,
Fetching thee from thy fastness down to them:
Despite the sorry saga. And not then
When death hath stopp'd my tongue (and posthumous
The tone-child waxeth) not then at the last
Need silence (still-birth of clangor troth-betraying,
Harsh-hearted) seal our lips of concord-faith:
Concord of union though the world misjudge
With allegation of horn-dissonance!
For, to the ages though my tongue be stopp'd,
Shall this our ring from out the glimmering Rhine
Greenly and gloriously emit the light
Of gold, pure gold: that all Rhine-seas of song,
Melodious-molten in the weltering wave,
Yield back unto the sun at evening as
At morning (ay, as now) a power of faith
Enarm'd — as now with shield and helm of proof
Aloft upon our wonder-rock sing we:
Sing we, aloft upon our morning-peak

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Which giveth back the sun unseen below,
Laws everlasting to the realm of song
Tumultuous, mountainous of passioning,
New and eternal new-eternally;
Godship beyond inheritance o' the gods! —
But they, though I might teach them, could not learn!

But, ah! dear maid! this Siegfried of thy faith
(Sudden, by pause of jubilation in me
For empty hearkening world's echoless void;
Myself estranged from the onward strength of men
And, all too soon, myself the god-apart:
Still as to-day no recognition sponsors
In critic-mind the mystic challenge-round!) —
Dear maid! alas, this Siegfried of thy faith
(Disown'd of the lives who bore too loneliness
The man-birth by their death in parentage!)
I feel, o' sooth, within the rolling Rhine
Of ages got of this, in ashes strewn
Abroad upon oblivion, the ring:
For all its unalloy, yet time-debased,
Revenged of time for that I outraged eld
Who stole the hoard by slaughter, scarce for grace
Derived of gods by whom I seem'd cast off

WAGNER

Acceptive of the moulded yielden gift! —
The ring, made mine of force unhallow'dly
(Scarce felt for an inheritance from them
Whose godship came anew to godship in me)
Forever hidden in the hollow'd grot
Of some subaqueous enchantment, lost:
Maugre all purity of vaunted wonder
And flawlessness from gods' obliquity! —
Lost out of life as out of life was lost
Each dwarf or monster of the brood of earth
Who erst had owed it and whom my sword displaced
By brutal dispossession! For no father
Nurtured me; and my foster-nurses e'en,
'Soe'er admired o' the callow forest-youth,
My muse hath curtly slain. And thy loved self,
Too privily debarr'd inheritance
Of thy warfather's world-publicity
And power effective (thou, my secret heir
To Walhall's domination, yet by me
Unowned for god-inheritress!), thy voice,
Thy desolated voice denied of men!
Alas, for the hero, mightiest music-mind
And mate of inspiration though he be!
Alas! for him who (though the philtre-cup

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Of fate excuse him!) thwarts the marriage-plan
Establish'd of an art's propriety,
Of social usage and precedence given;
Who, deputy but of authority
To bear the mystic bride unto her king
His master, yet, intoxicate with draught
Of private joy in self-despairing strength
Autonomous, enamoureth thereby!
How Tristan-like he lieth, lingering long
In agony of wanting, with the wound
Of inexpressible artist-anguish tortured,
The wound of the world whose wisdom he has wrong'd:
The wound his mad hand opens mortally!
Whilst thou but in his yearning (of the sense
Scarce-recognised), uncuring of the smart
Mayest soothe at best, for all thy hastening hither,
Only in bitterest anticipation
Of parting, the frenzied pulse-beat with thy voice;
And in thy coming doomest Kurwenal,
Dragg'st down King Mark with weight of friendship
fell'd:
The Liszt, the Ludwig harm'd by faith in me!
Thou hastest, doubtless, from earth's farthest confines
To be with him at the last, attest thy faith

WAGNER

And hearten him unto death's proof-avow'd
Of uttermost failure! O'er the genius-corpse
Thy life, too late arrived in the battled bark,
Thine own life, how it mourns him, with what sound
Most heaven-searchingly thy high swan-song
Announces from thy soul-abandonment
Still greatly true, faith-dignified in death,
The world-release heart-tragic absolutely
In ultimate annihilation ended
Of every dream'd-on life-accomplishment.
And where thou, pure Isolde, meltest down,
An obsolescence and antiquity,
Athwart the corpse of thy creative love;
There he, the hero, doubly lies forgot
(Lost out of thee as thou from the world art lost!);
And all is as though love had never been;
As though the spirit of music had not waked,
Not even to the lust that wrong'd the world,
The flux that flouted formulæ foregone
And taunted sane convention! And now I come
(The private passion, the secret love forsworn)
To music-reconstruction, the master-singing
(By dawn upon their wonted things of noon;
Not night-annihilative but, resurgent!)

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Of critical tradition re-enthused
With intimate artistry impassionate!
And in the reconstruction shall I teach them
(Not as by pearls to swine but, in communion
With what of godship ever was to them,
As through this friendship of a Liszt, a Ludwig!)
By speech still sane: that they shall understand!

Yet, soft! This master-singing! Let it echo
Never so nobly with the social strength
Of artist-organizing, yet what depth
Of paradox, of difficult dismay
Unto the private spirit which creates
Such enterprise entaileth! How enthuse
With intimate artistry impassionate
Their music of the academic law?
The very anti-art of formalism
Revive in mine own person (though forsworn
Be music-revolution!) unto proof
Of radiant beauty undeniable?
Though I abjure the fight, may I adopt
(As now attempted in my comedy
So close to score-completion) wantonwise
The school-traditional authority

WAGNER

As prentice still; yet turn my poetizing
(Avoidantly serene, untragicall
Of purport as of world's reception too!)
Beyond all praise or test, to breathing form
Perfectly self-demonstrative by note
On note of meaningful proportion, chosen
Tune-spontaneity and reasoning
Wonder: the song of songs and melody
Of sheer melodiousness? How play the god-part
Of personless creation, contentful
Yet whole, emotion'd yet of filial calm,
Proud but in piety, though heroical;
Presentative of men and women aye
Responsible, humanely as though godlike
And yet exempt from magic fate-commands,
Self-prized yet prize-compelling: when the man
Must crown the archaism he dethrones,
If aught's to be achieved of fruitfulness
In beauty seeded through the minds of men:
Men's necessary minds, still stupidly
(Save only Liszt and Ludwig of my heartstrings!)
Demanding demonstration of the art
In truth-terms academic, whilst decrying
Art's demonstration of truth-novelty?

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

For so the gods must prove allwise the world
And Walhall-everlasting be the times'
Onrush; and art, of art conservative,
For all its alteration: conserving but
As by renunciation of the best
And disavowal of the limit-goal
Of fancy-freed achievement, gaining all! —
Thus, thus alone, by truth-relinquishment
As truth were privily ideal, reaches
(With calm of heart and vision of such end
To hopes of self-achievement) the sick soul
A peace beyond all peradventure, peace
(Curing the wound of wanting and world-sin)
Of Holy Grail descended from above
On him who, thus renouncing not alone
The storm and stress but therewith overtly
All bourn of person'd impress on the times
(Unlike that Siegfried who apostatized
His singleness of mission, yet was slain!
Ay, Lohengrin-like; though, deeplier, Parsifal:
Scarce by withdrawal but, by entering in!),
Accepts the song-succession, the soft light
Of loftier than Walhall streaming down
Out of the dome of harmonies vouchsafed

WAGNER

In solemn onward rhythmic tongue of bell.
The gods of song have help'd indeed the hero
Who, by self-abnegation of all aim
(Mayhap my Liszt, my Ludwig feel this in me
Maugre my seeming-egotist despairs?)
Save reverent consecution, takes the bowl
Of blood belovèd 'twixt the hands of him
For consecration and for sacrifice,
To bless, release and rectify the truth,
Not in defiance, heart-tumultuously,
Nor with the hope of life-eternal here
Unless 'in Christ', successive in the whole
Of endless presence through the temporal stream;
By past-to-come absolved, resolved through prayer;
Healing not as by magic but release
From untoward interruption: through the grasping
Of weapons hurl'd transforming them to balm;
Scarce by avoidance, all-responsibly
Savior by pity, sympathizing still
With gods, progenitors wherefrom derived,
And marvel-ways of obsolescence; so
Successor-conservator militant
By spirit-classicism; saint approved
By generosity, yielding to art

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Because of reverence and self-despite
A canon as by insight-innocence,
By art-religion and law-mystery
Now understood, unlock'd with heart-key to it:
Not liable to love-death nor disown'd
Of any seas of song horizon-broad
Which bear within their wave the wonder-ring
And need not waft a troth-betraying bride
Too late to him who dieth of the law!
For such an one as he, this Parsifal,
Now waxing in me with acceptance of
The mission of succession beautiful
In order from the earliest, such as he
(Enlighten'd not by fairy speech of bird
From forest-ignorance to hero-lore
But, by the power of soul-significance
Enfranchised through envisagement of sin!)
Stands help'd of the gracious gods and founding them
More surely in Walhalla mountain-rear'd
By every humbler utterance. — Come we, then,
Companions of my stress and storm, Isold',
Brünnhilde, maids of mine imagining
(Ah! Kundry, your fallen sister, can but die;
Yet dies renew'd: old failures art-redeem'd!);

WAGNER

And learn how scions are we of the gods,
God-help'd and helping! Come ye, hand in hand!
The morning is upon the lands of song
Because the nights have been and ancient dawns
Have touch'd ere now the snow-peaks with their beams!
With reverent look and downcast tread ye soft
The porch of the temple: come, and enter in!
Hark ye the bell and lay ye by the horn.
Heed well the wealth of marvel o'er your heads;
And, sinking here in prayer with me, at last
Achieve, renouncing; teach, if teach ye will,
By fellowship. Ah! eating of the bread
Of healing sympathy, learn we the world!

GLADSTONE

How genuine, Lord! our immaturity!
With what conviction is our life begun
And final purpose; though the full career
Proves no conviction final and our end
Yearning but onward! If the life-span stretch'd
E'en to millennia, not the scant three-score
And seven of mine hour vouchsafed by Thee —
E'en to millennia, yet maturity
Were reach'd, if anywise within man's reach,
Not as a wakening from a dream of youth
To ripe realities then first achieved
But, mainly as a gathering-up of years
Past and of prior powers effectual
To the force of the moment and the purpose of it,
Sans prejudice to After or Before!
Yea, Lord! how otherwise the work began
In earnest conservation; and thereon
How earnest ('neath Thy guidance) the reform,
The reconstruction root and branch with hope
Of conservation only by the more
Laying the axe to the root for England's weal!
And yet how true the first sincerity,

GLADSTONE

How genuine the early agencies
Each at the need of the day; and now how strong
The inward urgency, under guidance of Thee,
Toward one stroke more (inglorious ease postponed)
Unlike aught hitherto (save Italy,
My propaganda for a freedom there,
Yield hint of a beginning) and yet impell'd
Both by sincerity of ethic need,
The thrill of a duty to denounce the Turk
In his unspeakable atrocity,
The thrill of moral need which ever urged me,
Quick'ning in me the mood of veriest youth;
Whilst, wise by retrospect of divers causes
Each in its turn mine oriflamme, no longer
Expecting in the work finality
Nor after-conservation (England lapsing
Perchance to Ottoman policy anew,
Though wiselier then than if not now aroused)
But claiming only for the hourly need
The fair, the fitting; and a work-of-youth
Brave in its passing consequence, sincere,
In proud-admitted immaturity!
Lord! at the outset of a championing
(Well-nigh unaided in a grim old-age)

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Which leads no man knows whither, let me lead
My mind in solitude within this church
Of Hawarden, whithersoever in Thy wisdom
The mind of man may wander reverently!

For, lo! we leave behind us not a youth
Inane nor self-deluded. For our youth
(Whether conservative, ay, or radical —
And, either way, there were good reason for it!)
In all that makes for man-maturity
(This surety that no wisdom were mature!)
And worthiness unto the work of earth
Lasts on, the only way may aught last on,
In the consequence, resurgence of our power,
By virtue of life's evolving moral need,
Of self-conviction; if with ever more
Contrast of past convictions so contain'd,
Even by such cumulation thus but more
With genuineness of the years-outlived
And prospect of a real accomplishment
In stimulation of a further purport
Purposed, equipp'd and arsenal'd. — The singer
Of Troy heroic, though to these our times
A boy in glory of outburst, glories yet

GLADSTONE

These problems of our boyhood's overplus
(These councils of the chiefs, these kindling fires
Of nation-wide uprising, as I trust —
Spare Troy the poison'd parallel of Turk!):
Sincerity (and with vision of the whole,
A sense of ethic need ennobling man!)
Streaming, illuminating, from the page
I oft have pored-on, in a secular mood,
For uplift in the turmoil and the labor
With splendor of application to our times;
Although but primitively hand-to-hand
The contest, crude the counsel of the clans
And wanting much in high morality
Their elemental gods. Ah, God, Thy Book
Of patriarchal, mild simplicities
(Not lacking, too, in strenuous interlude!)
Were loftier, sith inspired! Yet for me now
(Who want a youth, not three-score years and seven,
Wherewith to kindle England!) in Thy Homer
Upwells an inspiration verily
Anent the moment! For the youth of the world
(That phrase, *Juventus Mundi*, still it thrills me!)
Is his indeed. And of the youth of the world
That which was loftiest, the incitement of it,

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Ambition for achievement in the best
And boon of brave belief must bide in us,
Respond and echo from the brave-born soul
Of modern man, who (bearing burdens felt
For world-wide in our policies, for fraught
With spirit-problems sprung of the history
Of thrice-millennium since Ajax' hour)
Evolves, outlasts the earlier spirit-pose
Ever to new conviction! I am come
(O God, the splendid pain of change at heart!)
Through many an alteration of my judgment,
Through many a refutation inmost
Of confident assurance. But remain
Like Homer (like Ulysses of the bard
Now long our laureate) unskeptic still,
Believing in Thy truth and action through it —
Though somehow the conviction may not rest
But by its very operation alters
The disposition of environment
Which gave to faith vocation! Ah, may not faith
(Under Thy prompting, Lord, if it may be)
With incident operation, based therein
And so expressive of the inmost man,
Itself half-poetwise create for man

GLADSTONE

Whether for others also or oneself
(Ay, who would wait to find majorities
Before conviction and a founding of them?)
The fresh truth-disposition; and be faith
Coincident with truth from hour to hour
Alone by permanent power within the faith
Through function to establish ever further
The whelming conséquence and yearn thereto?
How have I, with this Homer in my veins,
Strode on from aim to aim, from youth-belief
To man-belief and man-belief anew,
Yet ever couraged and convinced afresh
Where critics well have carp'd upon the change
Crying for craven act-consistency
Where ever only wax'd consistency
Of consequence and growth to lead men on
Unto the making of a new fact-form
Whence newer needs and new convictions spring
More warrantable mainly than the old
Because by will to truth contributive!
Ah, had I been the charlatan (perchance
One such there were in England's councils now
Predominant, imperative?), sincere
In nought than shrewd time-serving, then had I

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Deserved the censure, where from moods without
Of divers men and things alone the warrant
Had for the alter'd action e'er accrued:
No faith to gripe a growth-congruity
In leading ever onward, in altering all
Of truth-interpreted to fit the faith
And thereupon in operation posing
(Not by a passive self-subjection 'neath
A nature's chance-selecting but, creative!)
The disposition of environment
To suit the new-born purpose as it may!
How false, had I not youth and Homer in me!
How sad, were faith not, in these things of earth,
The court of last appeal; and poetry —
The making-over of experience
In vision of a virtue not (to sense
Immediate and to chronicle) its own
But spirit-inward — with efficiency
The type of man's supreme prerogative
Of founding to the image of his soul
The future out of past accumulation!
For, with mine Homer in me, youth of the world
Upwelling though I grew but to the grave,
Were growth not merely life's compelling rule

GLADSTONE

(So Darwin in his simpler cynicism)
Enforced in blindness on reluctant clay,
But life's great glory of a poetry,
A demigodship of the living soul,
An high Olympianism of the man,
A proud impulsion spiritual within,
Whether 'mid Senates of the mightiest realms
Or stillly in self-searching privacy
As now with Thee, O Lord, in Hawarden church:
From within outward to make all things new
(By conservation of the older things
Their leading gradual, self-development)
And doubt not — more than need be for our
sight

Imperfect and our knowledge half-at-fault,
Our reverence for the practice-tested past
As standard of a truth time-reconciled;
And basing confidence in the poet-soul,
The youth which visions through maturity
An immaturity, an innocence
Of unfulfill'd adjustment if they will,
Which needs not life-eternal to achieve,
Nor immemorial monuments to prove
A presence now by foresight to the years

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

In work's effect though all our works are found
Imperfect to tomorrow's artistry!

O God, art Thou the One that doth not change;
And yet Thy works (as immanent in man's,
Evidenced in the puppets of Thy power)
All, all at change, based in a fact of faith
Alone which changeth not through every hour?
O God, art Thou then Faith and only Faith,
This warrant of earth-things which changeth not,
But nought beside of earthly incidence?
Or rather in every operation changing
Sofar as Thou in these creation-acts
Call'd man's art ultimately Poet-God:
An O'er-Olympian ever amid men
Concern'd and greatly fighting the good fight?
Shall men pretend that any Godliness
Abides our question (ay, or should abide —
For, lo! no coward skepticism here,
No cheap agnosticism waiving creed!)
Save as the search is answer'd hourly
Just in the youth, the reverent conviction,
The faith-at-application constantly,
The continuity of heart sincere

GLADSTONE

Which men may labor in and be at peace?
Art Thou then Youth of the World; Who, opening out
Thy self-unfolding never didst enfold
Until the unfolding that which seems to hide
Yet hid not; Thine all-immaturity
Poetic at creation evermore
Genuine in the making of Thyself?
And as we go into the grave dost Thou
As we have known Thee also truly die
Though resurrection be Thy youth-of-the-hour?
These very questions Thou art answering
Not every hour alike, but differing
If alway truly to each differing faith:
Mine own in this brief moment of communing
Startling the depths that in my thought of Thee
Had hitherto in seeming slept unchanged,
And truly slept unchanged till, wakening now,
Their very wakening stirreth, through the past,
A power at work within them dimly there
To mould a world-foundation, cast a faith
Which even as a faith hath not remain'd
A faith in faith-unchanging nor a youth
Of aging unaware! For deeds of youth
Were trick'd with a purpose haply to endure

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

(Though altering the hitherto-endured
If but by such factitious conservation!)
Unalter'd in intention whatsoe'er
The change and chance which might ensue thereon.
But now, with thanks to Thee that I have found
An organon of faith pragmatical
Enheartening in me my loneliness —
Yea, now I recognize the righteousness
Of unguess'd alterations; and desire
Not that the impact of the hourly blow
Shall echo to the ages my mere meaning,
The hope for the Cause, for victory, that is mine
When struggling for achievement presently;
But all be fluid (even Thy Church-and-State
As Turk or Balkan) with the fact of faith
In the retrocession: fluid, save as this fulness ,
Of comprehension of a temporal scheme
(Not for concealing truth but for revealing)'
Which understands and holds at every hour
The apprehended vistas infinite;
Themselves, as apprehended instantly,
Not subject to retraction, to holding-on
Nor ripe anticipation; and thus affording
The ultimate truth-standard though at each

GLADSTONE

Infinite instant in a truth and faith
Unique unto the hourly task at hand;
Themselves (in proof of such uniqueness felt
Of him who labors) rectifying earth
As in him lies by power of such a youth —
The vistas apprehended proving him
An Homer, biding poetwise despite
The crudity discover'd, the vainglory
(Yet victory still were truth's prerequisite!)
Of combat hand-to-hand for victory,
The spoliation, or the wantonness
Of godhood more contemptible than man
Because more capable in cruelty!
Ah! may such Youth of the World be in my work,
Lord, as Thine inspiration though I fail;
Leading this England on, far to outstrip
The uttermost reforms of this mine age:
A world-poetic of a Poet-God
Appreciating as it proves them false
These old-age ethnic liberalities:
As it turns and smiles at them; and feels their power!

BRAHMS

O BLEST conservatism of human minds;
O reverence for the mighty who have been
And who by splendor of the truth have told
A satisfaction everlastingly!
O spirit of classicism in our souls
And admiration of the proven path:]
Precluding all iconoclastic zeal
Within me as I set me to my song!
What peace, what pure support from by-gone powers
Avow'd, beyond mine hour's prevision, pour'd
Over and through this fever of the heart
Which starts the tone-blood tingling innerly!
What noblest vistas of achievements past
Now poised above the onlook; and within
The very music-flood of wave and wave,
Of throb and throb of this so passionate voice,
What deep-reflective, channell'd imagery
Ordering, regulating, holding wise,
Articulate and rhythmic-logical
The rhapsodies of elemental mood!
No loss of voice direct; with, oh, what gain
Of mastery in the tone-material,

BRAHMS

In context of the screed and history
Of art's own growth to prove the truth for new:
By just this solemn sense of splendid Bach,
Mozart of unimpeded purity,
Beethoven glorious for a canon given,
A method and a tried maturity!

How other than the wildness of romance
Which they of the half-insanity (untaught,
As 't were, of all mistakes, all axioms too,
Known to the humbler scholar) boldly laud;
Whom instinct only guides and draweth on,
Whom hatred of the past alone impels
And crude contempt for masterhoods achieved —
Blind leading! Ah, how otherwise than theirs
This music that is in me: and yet mine own,
Mine verily; as theirs may never be
Personal, wrought of fraught experience
Of world and man from boyhood upward still
(Witness our folk-song ever unforgot!)
In wide-eyed understanding of the moods
Of men, acceptance of the fact of fate,
And sympathy with cosmic issuings!
Ah, so; for surely spiritual more

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Than instinct is the sage insistency
Of serious appreciation basing
The onward step of apprehending soul!
(Forgive, O Muse, the seeming boastfulness!
'T is founded in an artist-piety
And reverent self-subjection as I toil!) —
The self-control, so, as the labor-pains
Of fervent parturition wax and wreak
Their will upon the works of destiny!
No mad, luxurious plaint at agonies
(To chaos fusing all resistant lore
Of logic-distance, cyclic hierarchy!)
Too poignant nor within their poignancy
Too sweet; but something spirit-solemnizing
In large restraint (retaining inferences
Multiform, order'd to the farthest spheres),
In large restraint remembering well the wonder
Of myriad births before in minds and hearts
Of human melodists triumphantly.
O blessèd sequence in the story aye
Of every fresh-creative immanence
Inherent to it as a dignity
Of self-containment, be they ne'er so new
These figures of the present utterance!

BRAHMS

The deep sustainment of the searching-back
(Though mind fore-reach an own eternity!)
Unto the uppermost and inwardmost
Endoming concave of the storehouse-brain,
The overarching heaven of memories!
What self-protection in the presence here
Imaginary of the master-six
Who shadowy o'er my shoulder lean and write
If with my pen yet well-nigh warningly
The sequence-scripture as it ought to be!
So Beethoven, so Bach and Händel might
(Nay, Mozart, Haydn or Schumann, as you will!)
Have juxtaposed such contrapuntal schemes,
Such themes melodic and such rhythmus-plans
With such-like harmonies. If that they did not
(Yea, if they could not, would not strictly thus —
A sense convinceth, these are mine alone
Because sincerely of my cultured heart!),
If that they did not, fairly may it seem
'T were but men's limitation of life-span,
Their absolute position there and then
(Which I, in loving them, well-nigh re-learn!)
Which could preclude our common faith and form.
An they had dwelt in the chamber here to-day

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Their work had been mine own; or not unlike
(Were they in youth and vigor) these my tones!
And they in me are vocal: not myself
All-unregardful, but, myself well-versed
And learning-influenced, a self the more
Motived by such compliance, more myself
As they by me more musick'd — that a world
Well-versed in Beethoven's, in Händel's song
May understand and heartfully receive
The utterance of the masters from mine hand,
While generously acclaiming works of me!
What service thus to keep alive the light
(Adding to truth though scarce displacing it) :
Of former uttermost achievements, now
(Where risk might be of practice-desuetude)
Revivified because of utterance
Fresh, new-impassion'd and with wisdoms of
A later world of men's veracity,
Lest technic (question trivial to the soul
O' troth) seem stale or scarce sophisticate!
What service and what privilege of mine
(And classicism feeds humility!)
To enter in and take traditional
The virtue of the earlier music-truth, ,

[BRAHMS

The absolute function of the torchbearer ;
Who, for his strong half-century of toil,
Paceth forever in processional
Of music's institution! For my heart
Is Bach, is Beethoven and Händel too,
Haply if but thereby in verity
O'er all mine own! And I, in uttering
The great tradition unto acceptance
Of scholar-culture, am but vitalwise
Original, an idiosyncrasy
Of innermost romanticism instinct
Because thus native to the truth-control! '

Hark, ye! who vainly after gods unknown
Are wideliest erring from the strict ascent!
Hark deep; and search if so, by shutting soul
From memory's sustainment and the power,
In terms of absolute tone-experience,
Sprung of the reverence of self-restraint
Within the idiom of a music-mood,
Ye have not emptied from the heaven's concave
The content of your tone-philosophies;
And, forcing music as a concept-speech
To tasks best suited of a sister-art,

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Yet welter in your æther as a void:
A music-void, whate'er your utterance
Of program and of picture openly?
Ye, lifting no torch; but (half-articulant
In terms of absolute music-idiom yet)
Cut-off as by a bedlam from the world,
Disabled by the doctrine of your dream:
All-vision, ay, but nought of firmament
Unless, through inference of speech and scene,
A firmament of earth too earthlily.
And, if ye be unskilful to sustain
Yourselves of the æther as an Icarus
And fear that earth-fall from the music-void
(The antique figure he of such romance
Which makes a void where art-void none had been!),
Spurn not what learning stirs, if yet half-womb'd,
Plume-budding, I swear ye, from the spirit of each
(In memories of a youth-hour, childhood-years:
The happy school of folk-song unforgot)
And reverence — these, for wings which fervors melt
not;
That loftily ye wreak, ere life be done,
The music-destiny as in me now!
Hark to the reminiscence, echoing

BRAHMS

The structure of the master, him who built
In centuries of contrapuntal toil
An heritage, which, 'neath the winds of fate,
Yea, as the gathering backward of the wave
With lifted image of the hills and skies,
Forward and forward ever bursts beyond!

NIETZSCHE

IF by their fruits (to quote the hated creed)
Shall men be known, ah, by what bitter fruit
Unto the weaker peoples of the earth
Shall I, the neglected and despised to-day —
Shall I, in saner hours the mild and kind —
Shall I be known and my mad name accursed!
Lo! by what rumors of approaching wars
Awful, o'erwhelming when the mightier hosts
Of Teuton like to locusts o'er the earth
(Our treaties torn and our most solemn oaths
Forsworn — for what were 'faith toward heretics'?)
Sweep down and on and over, leaving there
But fields burnt black and homes in smouldering
 heaps:

And everywhere the overhuman cult
(In cross of iron rigor-emblemized)
Crushing and crucifying; that the maim'd
And halt and blind alone survive the stroke
Of latest Hun and Vandal slaughtering them!
Ha! Where the far-famed temples of their creed?
Tottering, yea, tower on tower; the fallen naves
Bloody beneath with crush'd-out brains of men,

NIETZSCHE

Of women and of children whom a dogma
Senile and tottering drove in idol-hope
To prayer; and whom mine hope-of-overman
Hath stew'd and charnell'd on the altar-floor. —
Great wrath of glorious Germans! once aroused,
Mine ultimate aristocrats of earth
(How I mistook ye in the earlier days!),
To absolute ruthlessness: how shall the shrieks
Of Belgian (shook from superstition's trance),
Of Gaul (no Emperor to urge them now,
Nor culture comparable to our own!),
Of Gaul and Briton wild with streaming hair
Howl to their helpless heaven's all-vacantness:
Their heavens empty; and no power to save
Equal at all to man's, to overman
His power to dismay and doom the world!)

Muscle and sinew, steel and my fierce hate
Which fills the heavens of Frank and Angle, ay,
Low-spirited curs of quack democracy,
With soaring shells and shower of molten death,
With flare and thunder and the nations' end!
Not one shall live to tell the fearful tale
Where tongues from the roots are torn; not one awake

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

To flash the accusing eye, where eyes are ripp'd
From socket; not one hand remain to write
The desolate condemnation: for their hands
Are flung in the reeking ditch and only stumps
Of anguish'd arms implore where peace is none!
So shall they wreak who take of me the truth;
So shall they slay: because am I divine!
If 'by our fruits': these are the fruits of me!

What sayest thou, Christ? Have I not crown'd thee
now

With sharper than the thorns of ancients?
Yea, how I scorn the silly sacrifice,
The brutish sufferance of the underman,
The underdog in the world whereof wert thou
The crucified arch-type: imposed at last
On hated strangers; but from German hearts
(As in arch-type mine own) now blotted out
In triumph of a fitness to survive
Beyond all good and ill, all counter-rights
Of any than the chosen ego-few —
Thy stupid pitifulness, Christ, crush'd down
And trampled in the blooded, ashen mud
Never to lift again out of the grave!

NIETZSCHE

Ah! well-nigh with the froth of some wild-beast
At ravening rape upon the body of earth
I rant; and curse, O Jew, the Cross and thee! —

Nay, lift not, Jew! that darkening scowl at mine!
Nay, strike not with that sudden, angry arm,
Of recent centuries, unused and weak!
Art thou, too, cured of love; and with wan hate
A spectre stalking from the sepulchre
By soaking wounds of men revived and hurl'd
(Thou wast not always otherwise than I!)
Worldward anew, a spirit of ruthlessness?
Art thou, then, arm'd against me, to strike down
(In irony I mock thine impotence!)
The hand of my defence and hew it off
The reeking stump which powerless hangs apart
(In sport I picture it to frenzy thee)
A dripping spectacle? And wouldst thou take
My tongue and tear it? Wouldst thou pluck mine eyes
Green from their nerve-roots? Nay, be merciful,
Have pity, I implore thee mockingwise!
Yet someway I would see thee as thou hast been
(Yea, mainly, and when of heresies unplugged)
Not as in this delirium teasingly

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

I take thee for an Anti-Christ! For thou
Wast my great spoil and conquest, yielding me
An universe wherethrough mine egohood
(Thine, too, could persecute: ay, that I yield thee!)
Savage and splendid might achieve her end.
And if thou, too, enlarging on the old,
Cruel hint that comes to competence in me;
Yea, if thou, too, shouldst prove an over-hand,
An over-sword to smite and torch to burn,
Where, Lord, for thee or me alike would lie
A world to spurn and desolate? I prithee,
Down, down into the grave again and rot,
Peaceful beneath the sod blood-saturate;
And leave this world to super-savagery
Set-off and gloried by thy crown of thorn!
I crave thee, Lord! — Nay, nay, I know the cant:
How Gottlieb Fichte, rousing us to war,
Yet dream'd unto our Christianity
An human oversoul, self-unity
The same in each and every man of earth
(As though our sun-space were as cramp'd as thine)
And held us back thereby from license (ha!
No Gottlieb staid the conquest latterly —
Strange, strange, I could have wished it less entire! —

NIETZSCHE

Along our Rhine and after great Sedan!);
Who held us back in altruism whilst then
Our tribe gain'd freedom from the despot Gaul!
I know how now my cult of superman
In hearts too tender toward hypocrisy
Allows to each and every man of earth
The potency of private super-will
And therefore fain were Christian in respect
For every high ambition as mine own,
To spare the weaker peoples from dismay:
Thy cant of 'neighbor even as thyself'!
But I, O Jew, prefer and choose the test
(Now that the Vision breaks the Reason down!),
The truth, of independence; in my power
Of absolute purpose with the right of might,
The might beyond stale question ethical,
To combat; yea, O Lord (though even thou,
Forced by my fight to curse thy cant's-own creed,
Rise up in arms and hew my body down —
Indeed, indeed, thy strength grows wonder-keen!),
To struggle and oppose and hate and hew
The body of my neighbor, whilst mine own
I fearlessly expose to the flaming sword —
A mutual dependence of the strife

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

In both alike if still the cant thou cravest:
Believing in the combat, not in peace
Save by oppression and the crushing down! —
Thou wilt not back to the grave? Thou wilt not
down?

Come, then, strike hard, thou Christ! and let me see,
Whate'er the issue, my creed conquering:
Not thine, by any possibility;
A world unchristianized in meeting so
Arbitrament of war, of stroke to stroke
Determining survival — ah, no more
World-love hypocrisies but, by thy force,
My victory! Though the Fatherland should fall
And I, the neglected and despised of eld,
I, yea, be trampled 'neath thy cloven heel,
Thy nature stands corrupted by mine own!
Thy nature stands ennobled by mine own!
Ay, though I die, I leave thee in the deed
An Anti-Christ, mine image: ruthlessly! —

If 'by their fruits': this last and best is fruit;
That Christ must meet me in the over-doom!
And so, how nobly mine and mine alone
The militant high compulsion! Mine the name

NIETZSCHE

Dread with the rumor of approaching wars
Awful, o'er-whelming; mine the ruin-ash
Choked up with charnell'd corpses and the arms
Uprear'd in the dripping ditch where peace is none!
Mine, mine the glory: glorious, ruthlessly!

ROYCE

THE duty of a loyalty to truth
Compels that truth be spoken, whatsoe'er
The function of a civic violence
(Our nation, ceasing parley with the foes
Of man, thrice-arm'd against a pirate crew)
Must utterance provoke! For violently
Have falsehood and dishonor long laid hold
With horrible outrage on the stricken land
Which, calm and unoffending in the sun,
Barr'd but the barbarous path of savagery
From plotted spoliations: that, itself
Made victim to the fangs of the foil'd beast,
A Belgium bleeds. The appointed guardian turns
To desolator; and the ravishment,
All-unprevented though the half-world fight,
Persists in still-increasing agony;
Whilst we unmoved, unmoving stand apart
And with a scared, sleek courtesy disclaim
Occasion for a judgment: right or wrong,
Scarce for a neutral wisdom to pronounce!
O coward heart! O curst disloyalty
To our firm freedom of an upright past;

ROYCE

Lost honor-ideal of democracy;
Neglected faith of a people heretofore
Fair to the weak, downtrodden, fearing nought
Of overbearingness and tyrant-power!
O hated policy, which ties the tongue
And folds the hands with futile prayer for peace:
When, of all human chronicle, the worst
Outrage upon the holy spirit of man
(Fiendly prepared and fiendly screen'd by lies)
Now wantons, riots without let or check
To-day, to-morrow at our ocean-door
And all-precludes peace' possibility
(For us, as for our fathers otherwhile)
Unless within us be the conscience dead,
The spirit sodden, rotted to the core!

My friends, here gather'd together to attest
Your detestation of the Teuton crime! —
My friends, there is a progress of the spirit,
A process wherein the soul achieves herself
In virtue of a loved community
With other-souls of mutual respect;
An involution of the conscience-care
(Not for the narrower aims of merely me!)

POEMS OF PERSONALITY

Toward ever more and more the whole wide world
Of human hopes, of human purposes
Appreciated to fulfilment through
The consummations of a social good
Contributed in every deed and dream,
Each thought and striving of the least of us.
And we, the least of us, wax holiest
Best by the world-inclusion, the concluding
Of every evil in the cosmic course
Consciously toward a bettering — not, by blinding
The eyes of the heart, the ears and tongue tight-
sealing

Where uttermost appeal claims of the soul!
And we must choose the part of heedless sleep,
Else of the high and strenuous works of love!
Today, tomorrow is the call of love:
Not as in sanctimonious lethargy
Of waiting a millennium but, by dint
Of love's best blow, to bear the brutal down,
To fight the good fight where the fight hath join'd
Before our feet with horrid spectacle
Of nations ravish'd and the spoiler strong!
The spoiler: heeds he the precluded hopes
(Harmless and high in homely dignity)

ROYCE

Of them he sacrifices, stands he forth
With the cosmic onmarch of expanding insight,
The world-redeeming spirit? Or must the fiend,
Even for the glory of the greater peace,
Be beaten down and caged and tamed; to learn
The meaning of the earth-motive? — Oh, we stand
Now at the parting of the nation's ways:
The peace supine, the plausible partnership
In the huge injustice mask'd with guise of a mind
Open and judgment poised to wise suspense
(So rectifying nothing, opening so
Nought of a nobler future!); or at last
With burst of awful, pent-up sympathies
The mighty voice, the arm yet young to prove
By militant consecration wrong-compell'd
The strength of a right cause — America
Recorded in resistance: that, perchance
(All parley with the perjured being cut-off)
At any sacrifice of common ease,
At any cost in holy violence,
Truth-faith and honor and the loyalty
Which saveth with a savor shall not pass!





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